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January 1974 35p

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W. H. ALLEN

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Neilson Graham

Confessions of a Master-Spy

THE TRUTH is I, Gregor, am an investigator and I work for the Council for Private Affairs. My forte is the preparation of personal reports. The early stages of my rather long career were spent as attaché to the Information Bureau, a body now extinct (its functions have been taken over by the Council for Private Affairs), but as one of its principal employees I was entrusted with a succession of personal reports the pursuance of which gained me valuable experience in the field. Things were less streamlined in those days (a jemmy was a part of one's official equipment!) but I overcame many difficulties and it was as a result of my industry, not to say ingenuity, that I came to the notice of Mr McSharry, a man who has been instrumental in furthering my career. I was something of an inventor—I invented a number of small devices for overhearing other people's conversations—and there is no doubt that this impressed Mr McSharry who has been my boss ever since. But nowadays I do not work regularly. I have lost my hair and my hips are arthritic and I exercise my talents mainly in the home now.

On the other hand, if a job comes along I do not refuse it. I cannot imagine what would happen if I refused it. At this moment (at most moments) the whereabouts of Mr McSharry are unknown to me, but I don't suppose my whereabouts are unknown to him, and if I were to refuse a job it is possible Mr McSharry would commission a personal report on me and the quietude of my life would be irretrievably lost, not least by the fact that I would not know if he had commissioned a personal report or not. Of course, to a certain extent I always have that worry, but the answer to that is to lead a quiet life and not offend anybody, and this I try to do. I have my rose garden and my wife and nowadays we do not venture out much except to do the shopping and go to church.

MY FIRST REPORT, undertaken as an employee of the Bureau (as it then was) almost exactly forty years ago, was on my wife, Jacintha. We were recently married and I believe those in authority thought it a very good exercise for a young man newly trained and in need of experience. I do not say the assignment gave me pain, but initially I had qualms about it. Loyal though I was (and still am) I had hoped that this of all relationships might be free from investigation, or at least that any investigation might be conducted without my cognisance (for of course such investigations are often very necessary) so that if my wife were arraigned I would be spared the knowledge of it. But as it turned out no harm came of it, or none that I am aware of (always one must add this proviso) and we remain most happily married. Clearly, the most suitable person to compile a personal report on a woman is that woman's husband. He alone can spy on her in the privacy of her own home, in her very bedroom—without disguises, trap-doors, two-way mirrors or other crude devices—while she fulfils the private functions of her toilet. Nobody else can penetrate there unless it is her lover, and one of the principal tasks of an investigator is to establish if she has a lover. I resisted the temptation to assume that my wife was loverless and adopted the recommended procedure of remaining in her company continuously for seventy-two hours, leaving her only when she went to the bathroom and even then I peeped through the keyhole, but in the end I still could not be sure. It is a sad fact that in the last resort only a lover can

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know for certain if a woman has a lover (for this reason I have heard it argued that only a lover is properly qualified to compile a personal report on a woman, but this is nonsense since if the purpose of the investigation is to find out if the woman has a lover then it cannot be the lover who carries out the investigation); the husband can do no more than follow his wife around, risk suspicion of all kinds in doing so, and despite all his researches the truth may still evade him. Letters and telephone calls may arrive for her when he has finished his investigations or before he has begun. Of course, he contrives to open all letters during the seventy-two hours and answers all telephone calls but certainty is hard to come by.

"Millhouse 5454," say I picking up the phone, and if the receiver is rapidly replaced then I can be sure my wife has a lover. But no wise man replaces the receiver these days, rather he pretends he has a wrong number. "Mr Bleuthner?" he says, and in order to avoid deviousness which might rebound on me I reply truthfully, "No, this is Gregor," and the man apologises and rings off. But the really clever lover scorns wrong numbers. The really clever lover addresses me brazenly, "Is that you, Gregor?" and I am bound to reply "Yes" (though it hurts) and thereupon he pretends he is the man who sells the tar-oil for my roses, having cleverly found out the name of my garden supplier and also that I have ordered some tar-oil. Why people go to such lengths is beyond me. He will imitate the voice of my garden supplier to a T, having no doubt taken elocution lessons and gone to all this trouble just in case I should answer the telephone instead of my wife! This kind of thing is very common and we are trained to look out for it. There are ways of checking. I can ring up my garden supplier on the pretext of altering my order and find out if he is still alive. If he is dead my wife has a lover. Usually the proof is not so obvious. My garden supplier may agree he has rung me in which case I am bound to impute a double deviousness to the lover. Either he has tampered with the exchange so that calls to my garden supplier are diverted to his house, or else he is in league with my garden supplier in which case I must get my tar-oil from somewhere else. One can never be absolutely sure in these cases.

IT IS, I SUPPOSE, possible that other husbands have been saddled with personal reports on their wives following their marriage. It would be reasonable. Checks must be kept on the private affairs of young couples and on females in particular. On the other hand, if every young man worked for the Council for Private Affairs this would be very extraordinary. I received extensive training and I cannot suppose that just anyone is capable of carrying out an investigation of this kind. Skill and delicacy are needed and tact in preparing the report. If, by some slip, the wife were to get to know about it what would become of the Council? She would tell her friend and her friend would tell her hairdresser and sooner or later the information would get out and the integrity, the *raison d'être,* of the Council would be gone. Indeed, it would no longer be the Council for Private Affairs but the Council for Public Affairs and what is the use of that? Leaks are not in the nature of the organisation and I believe the Council goes to immense lengths to avoid them. I can only suppose that in the majority of cases reports on newly married women are carried out by experienced investigators, strangers to the marriage, who put on disguises to gain entry to the house. It is perhaps not entirely satisfactory but the risks to the organisation are less.

AS TO EXACTLY WHO is in the employ of the Council I cannot say. Not counting my contact, Mr McSharry, my knowledge extends only as far as myself. I work alone, as no doubt does everybody else, but a perspicacious individual cannot fail to observe incidents in his daily life which lead him to suppose that others are involved. Doctors, lawyers, shopkeepers, without a doubt such men exploit their professional role to gain access to people's lives. My doctor, for example, though a most congenial man and an excellent doctor (I believe), cannot be trusted since it is inconceivable that one whose job allows him access to so much personal information should not be in the employ of the Council. Of course, strictly speaking, if it were so he would be my colleague but unfortunately I cannot treat him as such for if I am wrong he will certainly inform upon me and if I am right, well he will do likewise

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on the grounds that I have betrayed my professional ethics. Thus I must, if necessary, suffer illness rather than expose myself to his scrutiny. On the rare occasions when I have not been able to treat minor illnesses myself I have approached Doctor Artois with extreme circumspection, surreptitiously scanning his consulting room for false doors, concealed devices, tell-tale papers and the like, even while he examined me on his couch. His questions I have answered in cryptic fashion, as, "Do you feel pain here?" to which my reply is, "Perhaps"; and if asked to say "aaaah" I amend it to "ooooh" or "eeeeh," thus avoiding any suggestion of complicity. Nevertheless, he touches me with his delicate hands and even though I school my body to deliver contradictory signals it would need an acrobat to maintain a foolproof defence. The fact is, I am grown dumpy in my old age and the flesh is weak. If the doctor discerns my illness then the pills he gives me are liable to cure me, but equally I may have fooled him in which case the pills may be dangerous, so I make a point of throwing away all pills just in case. To a problem like this there is no answer. Jacintha goes to Doctor Artois too but naturally she is unaware of the dangers and one of the disadvantages of my line of employment is that I can only point these out to her in the most indirect of ways. I cannot tell her to disobey doctor's orders, she would think I was mad. I am reduced to hiding her pills and telling her they have been stolen. Fortunately Jacintha's health is good and to date she seems to have believed me.

The principal drawback of my job, I will admit it, is that I cannot discuss it with anyone. I realise that this is in the nature of things but sometimes in the evenings when I am *very* tired I do secretly wish I could let my tongue wag to Jacintha, but it is impossible. My job, maybe my life, would be at stake. Jacintha herself is not to be trusted, and although it is the case that since my first report I have never been officially called upon to investigate Jacintha, the truth is I have never stopped investigating her in an unofficial capacity. The habit of mind is hard to shake off and one can never be sure of a woman. She may have a lover and I not know about it, she may be in league with the enemies of the Council for Private Affairs, she may even be a member of the Council for Private Affairs! Once I assumed that the Council did not employ women, but who knows? Quite probably the Council employ women precisely because no one expects them to. This would be in the best traditions of the organisation, but I dread to think what might have happened had I not been alive to the idea. As it is I can take precautions. The issue is complicated, however, by the fact that not only do I have to allow for the possibility that Jacintha may be investigating me, I also have to allow for the possibility that she may not, and in order to get at the truth I sometimes find it necessary to lay a trap.

Yesterday, while Jacintha was powdering her face, I deliberately strewed papers over the front room and waited for her to appear. She is a stickler for tidiness and I knew she would be upset. Her eyebrows shot up, but before she could say anything I said loudly, "Those are my business papers!" and walked out of the house, intending to see if she looked them over in my absence. If so, I would know that she was in league against me, but if not, if she merely tidied them into a bundle without looking at them, then I would know that she was not. But the problem, I realised, was that she might avoid looking at them to put me off the scent, knowing that I would be spying on her through the window. This possibility was so disturbing that I decided not to risk justifying Jacintha's suspicions (which, however, were not yet proven) and went into the garden and cut some flowers for her instead. When I got back the papers were stacked on the dresser, whether overlooked or not I do not know, and Jacintha was smiling again.

THE ODD THING is that even though I set up this kind of test I am no nearer certainty as a result. Certainty, as I have said before, is hard to come by. All it seems to do is place me in an even more dubious position with regard to my wife. At breakfast this morning, pouring out the coffee, I fancied Jacintha looked at me queerly and I had a sudden urge to put the question to her straight: "My dear, do you *know*?" But I only said, "You slept well, my dear?" to which she replied, "You should know." Oh dear, oh dear! She is right of course. I sleep

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in the same room (though in a different bed) but what does she mean? Does she suspect me of spying on her in the night, lying awake listening to all her nocturnal noises and mumblings in order to glean important information? If so, she is quite right, for that is exactly what I was doing, in my anxiety to know if she had seen through my little test of the day before. But I learnt nothing. Was this because she, like me, was only pretending to be asleep, feigning the mumblings to confuse and lure me into my own trap? Her response this morning raises the possibility. Clearly, I shall have to be far more careful if I am to get to the bottom of this without mishap. I am well aware that the simple answer would be to go to sleep and let Jacintha do all the worrying (except that I don't know if Jacintha has any worries) which would put me in the clear but would absolutely prevent me from finding anything out. No, I see I shall have to employ variations on the bluff again tonight, not to say the double-bluff, feigned nightmares, false snores and all.

Of all things, I regret the necessity to use false snores. One cannot be sure that one is getting them right and they threaten to expose me. Other people's snores are easy to do (Jacintha's for example) since one can listen and imitate, but with one's own one is always asleep at the time. This is particularly annoying as there is seldom any call to imitate anybody else's snoring (none at all to imitate Jacintha's) but frequent occasion, at least in my professson, to imitate one's own. And if one is a regular snorer, as Jacintha tells me I am, there is no help for it but to attempt a rendering of a noise one has never heard. Of course, I have Jacintha's comments to go on . . . like a bull . . . like an express train . . . but these are far from providing a perfect guide. I have had to invent my own snores, based partly on a sense of how I breathe and partly on Jacintha's comments, which I may well have got wrong, in which case Jacintha could know what I am about. But even worse, Jacintha's descriptions are rather excessive (the last thing I think of myself as resembling, even in my sleep, is a bull), could they be false? Is it conceivable she fabricates her descriptions precisely in order to hear me bellowing like a bull or like an express train in the middle of the night, just for the fun of it? It is a fearful thought and would mark the end for me if it were the case. It is one thing to suspect Jacintha of foreknowledge, quite another to have her toying with me like a puppet. True, she complains about my snoring in the mornings, which would suggest that she is not responsible, but this could be a ploy designed to calm my fears and lull me into complacency. Jacintha, a master of the double-bluff! Inevitably I find myself asking, has the whiphand passed to my wife . . . ?

Anniversary

Endlessly the stream slides past,
Jellies each flat white stone
Which stares through its slithering window at
The sky's smeared monotone.

Two willow leaves glide smoothly on
The waters shimmering skin.
Inches apart they float along,
The distance never changing.

Once, on a branch in the sun, they danced,
And often touched each other.
They will not touch each other again,
Not now, not ever.

Vernon Scannell

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Golo Mann

W. H. Auden

A Memoir

I CANNOT do justice to his work, because though I knew it well in some respects, I did not know it thoroughly enough. In any case, I am not competent to judge it or to assess its place in literature. Instead, I offer this bundle of personal memories.

I first heard his name in 1935 when he married my sister Erika, though he had never set eyes on her before the wedding. It was on his part a generous gesture to a German émigrée, to help her obtain a British passport. Auden's telegram agreeing to the marriage consisted of a single word: "DELIGHTED." A few months later he turned up at my parents' house at Küsnacht, on Lake Zürich, to indicate that he wished to take the relationship seriously. In fact, it developed into a kind of friendship. He was lanky and slovenly dressed, "*nicht gerade schön* (not exactly attractive)", as our housekeeper thought; his manner was appealingly awkward, but at the same time self-confident. If one studied him closer, he had the air of one who was used to being *primus inter pares*, one might even say a triumphant air, so long as this does not suggest anything exaggerated or theatrical. I took him to the airport, where he was to fly to Australia to cooperate in a propaganda film for the newly developing tourist trade. At that time, he had already earned a reputation as a poet and a critic of distinction, and he continued in this dangerous métier for nearly forty years; always fresh, always original, and of an astonishing independence of mind.

We came to know each other better in New York and in neighbouring Princeton in the first half of 1939. I have never talked to anyone whose conversation was more striking and provocative. Auden was a born teacher, which was his original calling in England, but a teacher of the old school. Of Goethe's conversation he wrote: "What happens when one master of monologue meets another? After his meeting with Madame de Staël, Goethe reported, 'We spent a very interesting hour. I couldn't get a word in. She talks well, but at great, very great, length'. . . ." Auden went on to quote from Amalie von Helvig: "In the meantime, a circle of ladies confronted our visitor [Madame de Staël] with the question, what kind of impression had our Apollo made upon her. She also reported that she couldn't get a word in. 'But' (she is said to have added with a sigh) 'when anyone talks so well, it's always a pleasure to listen.' . . . "

I don't know whether Auden was thinking of himself here, but he might well have been. His conversation also was one-sided, and any remark one might try to interject was brushed aside with a "Quite." But I felt as Madame de Staël did, only without the sigh.

A few scraps of conversation in 1939 have remained in my memory. On religion: "I take it for granted that when you write something you take the greatest possible trouble with it. Why? Success, fame, money? They are all very important. Yet they are not the real reason. What is the real reason?"—Later: "In each of us, there is a bit of a Catholic and a bit of a Protestant; for truth is catholic, but the search for it is protestant."

On fathers and sons: "If the father is a novelist, the relationship is bound to be embarrassing, because he cannot help seeing the son as a character out of his novels." On the principle of loyalty: "If you can't keep faith, you are lost." On lyric poets: "They are not dependent, as

W. H. AUDEN *died in Vienna, at the age of 66, during the night of 28-29 September 1973, after a reading of his poetry in the Palais Palffy.*

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people imagine, on feeling, inspiration, love, moonlight, despair; they are craftsmen who, like anybody else, earn honest money by working for the market. And that's all for the best; it imposes a discipline on them, without which their talent would come to nothing."

He pronounced such words of wisdom with a certain dry didacticism, but also with humour, if they were amusing observations about daily life; but always *ex cathedra*, as if they were not subject to discussion.

I also think of his innumerable critical reviews as a form of monologue. Both in content and length, they are overgrown essays, though not in the sense of "attempts." Nor are they monologues in the classical sense of dialogues with oneself, but rather with the reader. Auden never argues with himself, never amends or modifies what he wishes to say. He puts his cards on the table; that is why I speak of his *ex cathedra* manner. Yet his style is never dictatorial; on the contrary it is intimate and friendly; relaxed is perhaps the best word for it. Nine out of ten of his pronouncements, taken at random, are so illuminating that to the reader it is as if the scales had fallen from his eyes.

He was the most intelligent man I have known, or rather, because "intelligence" only suggests insight and understanding, the cleverest, with a cleverness which was essentially creative. He thought truths out for himself. Many of them could have been expanded into whole books. But he only presented them, in his own particular way, unsystematically. So there is no Auden "philosophy."

He did not always obey his own principle, that the poet is principally a craftsman, but most of the time he did. When, in January 1939, my youngest sister married the Italian literary scholar Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, the wedding guests found on their seats a printed poem, several pages long, "Epithalamium, commemorating the marriage. . . ." Not that Auden was particularly intimate with Signor Borgese, or with his bride. He simply seized the opportunity, like 18th-century poets who derived a part of their meagre incomes from such occasional pieces, or like clergymen from their ceremonial duties. Even in Auden's later volumes of verse, so-called "Commissioned Texts", poems written to order and for a fee, have their appropriate place.

He liked to model himself on the 18th century. When we first met, he regarded Pope as his master, so far as he had a single one (in fact he had many; or none). In any case, this discipleship was the source of his long, philosophical, didactic poems, the "Letters to . . . ." They were works which he himself took very seriously, but I think they were also intended as a proof that, in spite of everything, it was possible to write such works, or it was possible for him, even at the present time; that everything was possible to his genius and his strength of will. He was a master, a virtuoso, of poetic form, and he liked to show that he was.

I was a neighbour of his, in January 1939, at the time of the death of W. B. Yeats, whom he greatly admired. He immediately wrote two poems, *in memoriam*; the first extremely "modern" with loose, scarcely recognisable rhythms. The second might have been written by Tennyson:

> *Follow, poet, follow right*
> *To the bottom of the night . . .*
> *In the deserts of the heart*
> *Let the healing fountain start. . . .*

From Auden I derive my own definition of poetry: something which creates order and can be learned by heart. (I would not say that Auden was always faithful to the second condition. No one could possibly recite "A Letter to Elizabeth Mayer" by heart.) A *Poeta Doctus*? His virtuoso mastery of all poetic forms and styles, his erudite references to mythology, sociology, psychology, his insatiable hunger for good books, for truth, for ideas, might make one think so. But I would deny that the description fits him. It conflicts too

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sharply with the charm and brilliance, the mischievous gaiety of so much of his writing. He said of Goethe that he found it difficult to express himself in prose, and easy only in poetry. Both came easily to Auden.

Of English poets, he loved Donne and Blake (one cannot really *love* Pope); of German poets, Goethe (especially the *Westöstliche Divan*) and Hölderlin. He spoke the lines, *Ich bin nichts mehr, ich lebe nicht mehr gerne!* in a voice which only too clearly revealed his sense of the inexpressible grief which they convey—grief was indeed no stranger to him.

He had learned German in Berlin, before 1933, when the German capital exercised so strong an attraction on young Englishmen; he practised it later by translating (Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, in collaboration with his friend Elizabeth Mayer); and finally, in Austria, he made it his second language. He grasped every nuance of the language, as when, for instance, Qualtinger's "Herr Karl" switches comically from Viennese dialect to a pretentious literary German. He claimed indeed to know the original of Herr Karl, the proprietor of a delicatessen shop in Vienna.

IN 1940, I lived with him for a time in Brooklyn, in an old house, much reduced in the social scale, which he rented jointly with a New York writer named George Davis (who later married Kurt Weill's widow, Lotta Lenya). Other lodgers settled in there. Since three of the inhabitants, Auden himself, Carson McCullers, and Benjamin Britten, later became very famous, I have often been asked about the household. It must surely, people say, have been a "Commune" of exceptional interest and distinction? To this I can only reply that a community of this kind often seems more significant to the hindsight of strangers than it did to those who shared in it.

As a matter of fact, when I think of the house in Brooklyn, the only figure I really see is Auden —though in the role, not of a poet of genius, but of a stern head of a family. He kept order in the house. There were two coloured servants, who cleaned and cooked the meals—formal, heavy meals which were eaten in a gloomy basement with plush-covered furniture. If anyone was late, Auden did not conceal his disapproval. Expenses were covered in accordance with a complicated system thought out by Auden; all subscribed to the general domestic economy, and there were individual prices for each meal. It was a serious question how many meals anyone had missed, after due notification in advance. Once a week there was a "bill-day", announced with a certain satisfaction by Auden at breakfast time; afterwards he went from room to room collecting payment. He ate enormously, and also drank a great deal, but only wine—a cheap Chianti or something of that kind; never, in my experience of him at the time, hard liquor.

No one was ever less of a Bohemian, though those who didn't know him might have mistaken him for one. The cottage in lower Austria where he lived in summer from the late 1950s onward was meagrely furnished. In the living room there was a large, rough-hewn table for writing on and a couple of chairs; no bookshelves; the floor covered with piles of books and half-empty wine bottles. But this was only the outward appearance. He attached no value to the display of possessions, but much to a strictly conducted rule of life. So long as I knew him, he never went to bed later than eleven o'clock, so as to be fresh for work in the morning. If visitors were not aware of his habit, he did not hesitate to impress it on them.

Benjamin Britten soon left Brooklyn and returned to England, presumably because he did not wish to remain far away from his native country in time of war. Auden remained. This did not endear him to his countrymen, soon to be his ex-countrymen. When I showed him a hostile article in an English paper and said it required some reply from him, he cut me short: "There is no point." It was another example of his independence, self-confidence and pride. He knew that he would survive such a crisis, best of all by taking no notice of it.

He was never rich, but after his first difficult period in America from 1938 to 1939, he always earned enough to satisfy his needs. In business affairs he was a hard and cunning bargainer. "I always double," he said, meaning that he always demanded twice what he was offered. For the publishing profession he had no respect. "They are all criminals," he said to me in German (*Sie sind alle Verbrecher*). He could be arrogant, even contemptuous in his business dealings; believing, I think, that for one who practised so precarious a profession the best means of defence was attack.

HE NEVER WANTED to write an autobiography, although there was no lack of material. A writer,

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he thought, is a maker, not a doer, and only the latter has anything to tell about his own life. It is well known that he began his career as a "Left intellectual" and a militant anti-Fascist. His knowledge of Marx, Freud, Brecht; his visits to China and to Spain at the time of the civil war; the poems written during the 1930s, are all evidence of this. In 1938–9, in America, he underwent a change. It was of a religious nature. Perhaps his reading may have played a part in this, in particular Reinhold Niebuhr's great work, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, which he studied and to which he devoted one of his most deeply considered pieces of criticism. Fundamentally, however, Auden never allowed himself to be led by others; he picked out of books what he needed for himself and digested it to an extent which justified him, subjectively, in claiming it as his very own. At this period I heard him say one day: the English intellectuals who now cry to Heaven against the evil incarnated in Hitler have no Heaven to cry to; they have nothing to offer and their protests echo in empty space.

From this he drew his own conclusions, which were the product both of reasoning and of his own very strong force of will. On Sundays he began to disappear for a couple of hours and returned with a look of happiness on his face. After a few weeks he confided in me the object of these mysterious excursions: the Anglican Church. And in the church he remained for thirty-three years. In Kirchstetten, an area where only a Catholic church exists, he went to Mass and on Corpus Christi marched in the procession, immediately behind the *Bürgermeister*. The village treasured that; and he treasured the village. There is a book by William James called *The Will to Believe*; this was the case with Auden. I have no doubt that his decision was good for him, for his soul, for his way of life, for his work. It also made him even readier to help others, and with a readiness to help which was methodical, slightly severe, and protestant in spirit.

Consistent in all things, he revised his views of man, of society, of history in the light of his newly acquired faith. He remained, as before, politically aware. I have a letter from him in 1965 in which he discusses his ideas about the partition of Germany and related matters. "Do you agree that what West Germany should do is to invest heavily in East Germany? So long as the difference in living standards between the two is as grotesque as it is now, Ulbricht *cannot* make concessions. Only a fairly popular régime can make them. And I did not meet a soul in East Berlin who respects *Der Spitzbart*. . . ."

After the invasion of Czechoslovakia, he wrote a poem—"August 1968"—which in a few lines conveys his violent sense of outrage. He no longer expected politics to provide any kind of salvation; disaster rather; and at the very best the avoidance of the worst disaster. What is known as "history" now seemed to him a fundamentally irrational, cruel, hopelessly idiotic process. Instead of the spirit of universal love which is characteristic of the Left, there came something which was close to global pessimism, modified by a deep sympathy for individual people.

There are two moving examples of this in his volume *City without Walls* (1969); the poem to his dead, unhappy neighbour in Kirchstetten, Joseph Weinheber,[1] and the elegy to his housekeeper after her death.

> **Liebe Frau Emma,**
> **na, was hast Du denn gemacht?**
> *You who always made*
> *such conscience of our comfort*
> *Oh, how could you go and die . . . .*

Emma Eiermann and her brother Josef were German refugees from Czechoslovakia, and they took care of Auden's house and garden. Their misfortunes filled Auden with the deepest sympathy, and also with contempt for the working of "history", for the way in which the Czechs had made these two totally innocent people pay for Hitler's crimes. The elegy is full of this feeling. When I returned to Kirchstetten, alas! after five years, and alas! for the last time, they were both dead. The themes of the elegy are very characteristic of the later Auden: grief, gratitude, a loving understanding of a *coeur simple*, with all her idiosyncrasies and eccentricities; and also, which is something I have nothing against when it is of the right kind, an arch-conservative point of view.

> *but catastrophe*
> *had failed to modernise you,*
> *Child of the Old World,*
> *in which to serve a master*
> *was never thought ignoble.*

Such women, he knew, have no successors.

[1] *Categorised enemies*
twenty years ago,
now next-door neighbours,
we might
have become good friends,
sharing a common ambit
and love of the Word,
over a golden **Kremser**
had many a long
language on syntax,
commas,
versification. . . .

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How HAPPY, or how lonely, Auden was at the end, I do not know. He had been a success for decades, had lived a life of independence in very beautiful places—California, Ischia, Austria. He had worked together with others, in his early years with Christopher Isherwood and later Chester Kallman—team work, that corresponded to his conception of the artist as craftsman. With a deep understanding of literature, poetry, psychology, theology, he had an equal love of music, which is a communal medium of expression particularly if one practises it as a librettist and song writer. This was one reason why he settled in Kirchstetten; he had to be near an excellent opera house.

He was fond of reading his poems aloud, not without a sense of the dramatic quality of the occasion. "I am a ham," he used to say. He was one who enjoyed making public appearances, who liked to entertain others. In short, he lived in an intricate web of human relationships. And yet, there was a touch of the solitary about him, especially towards the end: in the spontaneity of his conversation, so unconcerned with the listener, and also in his laughter.

But just as he had the will to believe, and the will to goodness, so also he had the will to happiness. In one of his last critical reviews, published a few months ago in New York, he digresses, as was his way, from its ostensible subject to another one, which was himself. He was, he said, a happy and a grateful man. He had been a worker and not a labourer. A worker is a man who enjoys what he does and is paid for it by society. A labourer is one who, in order to earn his living, has to perform work which he finds dull and uninteresting. He had had many friends, and still did: "I have many friends whom I love dearly." But there was the shadow of old age, always of old age. I quote from memory: "I ask *le bon Dieu* to take me away when I am seventy. But I am afraid He won't. . . ."

Le bon Dieu was kinder than Auden hoped.

Saturn

Its temperature is
Gratuitous.
It does
Not strive for coldness,

But burns away from
The sun
In the sun's 6th rim.
Its seasons run

Counter to ours,
For nothing on earth
Could live
In such a dearth

Of heat. At −240 degrees
Fahrenheit,
It has no trees,
No mountain granite

To pinch a nerve,
No fields
To picnic in, no caves
To shield

Yourself from wind.
It takes
Its coldness
To its heart, depends

On ice to make
Its summers.
Mars is closer,
Venus hums.

More brilliant,
Jupiter
Is larger
Than the largest words

But I lean toward
Saturn.
I grow warm
Thinking on it.

Louis Phillips

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David Holden

Allende & the Myth Makers

Political Realism & Revolutionary Romance

UNFEELING AS IT MAY SEEM to say so when the bloodshed of the Chilean *coup d'état* is still so keenly remembered and the generals who made it are riding unpleasantly high, the fact remains that Salvador Allende died a lucky man. In life he was a failure. Both his policies and his country were shattered long before the end. But in death he achieved success beyond his dreams. Instantly canonised as the Western world's newest left-wing martyr, he became overnight the most potent political cult-figure since his old friend, Che Guevara.

To some extent, of course, the congregation had already been prepared for this posthumous elevation. In the three years of Allende's administration the "Chilean experiment" and the "Chilean road to socialism" had become favourite topics of discussion among left-wing groups in Europe, where Chile's supposed resemblance to Italy or France had encouraged the belief that Europe might, for once, follow in Latin America's footsteps instead of the other way about. Many aspiring revolutionaries from Europe and the United States had actually joined their Latin American counterparts in Chile in much the same spirit as their dropped-out contemporaries had hitch-hiked to Nepal hoping for a glimpse of Paradise in action. By the time of the September *coup* the military junta claimed there were as many as 15,000 foreigners of all kinds in Chile, actively supporting—sometimes with violence—the "socialist revolution."

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These specially interested groups or individuals obviously provided a ready network for international propaganda in the aftermath of Allende's death. But the shocked and, at times, almost hysterical reaction to the *coup* went far beyond such committed parties to embrace many of the West's ordinary liberals and social democrats. For them, as much as for the self-styled revolutionaries, it seemed, a bright light of world-wide hope had been extinguished in Santiago; and from Washington to Rome, via Paris, Bonn and London, anguished cries of "Foul!" rent the air.

THE OUTCRY IN BRITAIN was typical—and instantaneous. The *coup* was described as "A Revolt Against the Ballot Box" for which the Chilean armed forces could offer no excuse (*The Guardian*, 12/9/73); as a "Disaster in Chile" that would "set back the cause of socialism and democracy everywhere" (*New Statesman*, 14/9/73); and as "The Death of a Hope" comparable, even, to the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia that ended Alexander Dubcek's régime in 1968 (*The Observer*, 16/9/73).

Within 24 hours of the first, bare news of the *coup* the General-Secretary of the British Labour Party, Mr Ron Hayward, was writing officially to one of Allende's former colleagues to say that it was difficult to express the sense of horror and anger felt by the British Labour movement "as the aspirations of the working people of Chile—shared by so many others around the world—are destroyed at the hands of a few arrogant and ignorant officers acting at the behest of those who believe their right to rule is unchallengeable" (*The Times*, 13/9/73). Mr Len Murray, General-Secretary of the Trades Union Council, expressed his shock and abhorrence with equal speed and vigour. And Mrs Judith Hart, speaking as a

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member of the Labour Party's National Executive, unleashed a torrent of assertions so passionate as to suggest that her mind had come close to being overthrown with Allende's government. They ranged from the declaration that "the democratic will of the people of Chile" had been defeated by capitalist "collusion" (*The Guardian,* 17/9/73) to "for Socialists of this generation Chile is our Spain" and "This is the most vicious fascism we have seen in generations" (*The Guardian,* 19/9/73).

When the Labour Party Conference met at Blackpool three weeks later these instant reactions had hardened into established orthodoxy. The former Chilean Ambassador in London was given a standing ovation when he became the first non-delegate to address a Party Conference since two Spanish Republicans were allowed to do so in the 1930s. Resolutions were then carried utterly condemning the military *coup* and the precipitate action of the British Government in recognising the military junta; demanding the recall of the British Ambassador from Santiago and the withholding from the military régime of all aid, loans, and credits; and calling on the Labour Movement to campaign for the restoration of democracy in Chile and to offer financial *and other* assistance to the Popular Unity (Allende's) movement (*The Times,* 5/10/73). My italics.

AS AN ILLUSTRATION of the pathology of what may loosely be called "progressivism" the reasons for this fierce reaction would repay study. Probably they included a happy chance of timing. Several of the most fashionable matters of Western political protest had passed into history or been shadowed by disillusionment in the year or two before Allende's downfall, from Viet Nam and Greece to Black Power and the Student Movement. Allende's dramatic end supplied a new cause just when it was wanted. Familiar double standards were certainly involved. Nobody at the Labour Party Conference, for example, thought it necessary to ask why such a royal welcome should be offered to the representative of a government which had included one of the very few Communist parties outside Eastern Europe to approve the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. A Pavlovian response to the very idea of "revolution" was also clearly in evidence—and made all the more eager, it seemed, by the fact that this particular revolution had been taking place at such a safe distance in such sublimely foreign parts. There was, perhaps, a characteristic love of worldly failure, too—for it was difficult to read some of the more extravagant expressions of grief at Allende's death without sensing a touch of gratification at the idea that Good had once more succumbed to Evil and so delivered another martyr unto Heaven before he could be corrupted by the practical demands of life on Earth. But most of all, perhaps, the response seemed to stem from ignorance and wishful thinking—always the two most powerful sources of political romanticism—which left the facts of life in Allende's Chile either unknown or ignored and the field wide open, therefore, to the creation of instant myth. Hence the composite picture, now accepted throughout a wide spectrum of Western liberal and left-wing opinion, of Allende as a genuine social democrat of impeccable constitutional propriety who met his end at the hands of a fascist conspiracy on behalf of a minority "ruling class" aided and abetted by the United States of America.

To replace this romantic vision with something approaching reality may already be impossible, for myths undoubtedly possess a life of their own immune to rational challenge. To attempt to do so also may entail some risk of abuse, for it seems to be a common assumption nowadays that anyone who seeks a rational explanation of a military *coup d'état* (unless it happens to represent a left-wing interest) is necessarily a fascist beast.

I SHOULD MAKE IT PLAIN, therefore, that I am concerned here with Allende's Chile and not with what has taken its place. I hold no brief for military juntas, nor for the summary executions, mass imprisonments, censorship or whatever that the Chilean junta may have inspired or tolerated during its early months of power. Indeed, because I happen to know and like Chile as a country and count a number of Chileans among my friends I feel some personal sadness at the country's present plight. But I feel no surprise nor, I am afraid, much moral shock. Military men will be military men, the world over; and in any case Chile was left in such a mess by Allende that some vindictiveness, alas, was only to be expected when he fell.

Nor am I concerned with Chilean might-have-beens. I accept that the country needed genuine social reform and I believe that it probably could

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have been achieved without violence by a democratic government that was ready to work pragmatically within the constitution and with a proper respect for what the economic and political fabric of Chile would stand.

But that is not the point any more. What I am concerned about is how the country came to its present pass. And without wishing to speak ill of the dead, it seems to me necessary to say outright for the sake of the living that the Chilean *coup* was largely Allende's own fault and that the myths with which it has been surrounded on the Left are not merely a falsification of Chilean history but a potential danger to the future of liberal and social democratic politics in the Western world as well. Indeed, what is most disturbing to me about the fashionable Western reactions to events in Chile is their revelation of the degree to which revolutionary romanticism has combined with left-wing cynicism in recent years to corrupt our own politics. It is certainly "no accident" that, for example, the British Labour Party which so uncritically adopts Allende's cause is also the party which has permitted its self-avowed Marxists and utopian socialists to gain factional positions of unprecedented power.

I will leave others to pursue that theme, however. All I want to do is to try to set some of the Chilean record straight—or at any rate, straighter—by looking in some detail at three of the main myths that now surround the end of Allende and his famous experiment.

1. The American Intervention Myth

THIS FOUND its most virulent expression in the equation of Allende's downfall with that of Dubcek. Yet in the absence of any American armed assault to compare with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia—let alone the fact that whereas Dubcek's Parliament supported him against the Russians, a majority of Allende's Congress invited him to resign—there were only stereotype suppositions to sustain it.

In general, the American intervention myth seemed to derive from that characteristic Latin American and left-wing scapegoat complex which insists that the *Yanquis* are responsible for everything (except, of course, anything good). Garnished with historical fact (Guatemala, the Bay of Pigs, etc.) this is frequently transmuted in Latin American affairs into a plausible anti-American smear; and the state of Washington politics in 1973 was, of course, guaranteed to give such a smear extra credence this time. The *New Statesman* offered a fine example. "The likelihood is that the trail will lead back to the Pentagon", it assured its readers, "if a proper investigation can ever be mounted. But in default of this it does seem possible to say that Nixonism and its allies were already too heavily implicated in the subversion of Allende for them to be exonerated now" (14/9/73). The charge is almost ectoplasmically vague yet simultaneously all-embracing. But what does it actually rest on?

First, presumably, the celebrated memorandum of ITT which suggested ways of preventing Allende from assuming the Presidency in 1970 and of toppling his régime if he did so. There is, of course, no doubt of this memorandum's authenticity, nor of its appalling folly; and with such organisations admittedly pushing their conspiratorial notions at the heart of American politics it is not surprising that suspicions of *Yanqui* skulduggery were aroused. But there is a major snag for anyone who sees the memorandum as evidence of actual dirty work: simply, that all inquiries so far indicate that its recommendations were never adopted. They were studied by the CIA, where one department produced a contingency plan based upon them. But neither the memorandum nor the plan seems to have received assent at any higher level; and given the kind of public exposure to which the workings of the White House, the CIA and most other things in Washington have been treated during the Watergate crisis (including the allegations of Nixon's personal involvement with ITT), I am hard-pressed to believe that if such assent had been given it could have been kept quiet until now.[1]

Secondly, in support of the American intervention theory, it is pointed out that the U.S. maintained its contacts with the Chilean armed forces and continued to supply them with arms when other American aid to Chile was suspended. Therefore, so the implication goes, the

[1] Addicts of the ITT conspiracy theory might like to work out, incidentally, why ITT in Chile was never taken over by Allende, even after the notorious memorandum became public property. Was it, perhaps, because its operations there were mostly losing money and Allende did not want to share its financial embarrassments? Or was it that he knew the company had given him an effective political stick to beat his opponents with and he did not want to throw it away by kicking the company out? Either way, ITT's apparent immunity from reprisal did not suggest that he took its challenge very seriously.

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Pentagon was deliberately keeping open the option of inspiring a military *coup* against an unwelcome government. But this is obviously a two-edged argument. For one thing, an army that is still getting its toys to play with is usually rather more than less likely to endure the follies of its ruling politicians gladly. And for another, what would have been said if the Americans had actually suspended arms shipments to forces whose commanders were serving in Allende's cabinet? The outcry about "*Yanqui* imperialism" and "Pentagon politics" may easily be imagined.

Thirdly, the strangulation of foreign aid and credit is laid at Washington's door as a major weapon in a cold war against Allende from the start. At first glance this has more substance to it. The U.S. certainly suspended further commercial credits of its own to Chile after Allende had nationalised the American-owned copper mines on terms amounting to confiscation. As the major power in the World Bank and the IMF the U.S. also argued there against further aid for Chile; and to the extent that it was successful it must have added to Allende's financial difficulties. But it was not able to prevent other Western countries (*e.g.* Holland and Sweden) from continuing to offer credit; it never persuaded Britain to close down its small aid programme; it did not exclude the re-scheduling of most of Chile's foreign debt repayments in 1972, and it had not prevented the discussion (incomplete at the time of the *coup*) of a similar re-scheduling for 1973. In short, the U.S. influence may have limited Western aid and credit but it was far from being able to condemn Allende's Chile to economic purdah. In any case, Chile was not one of the under-developed world's hard cases, totally dependent on external aid and credits for its survival. The wealth of its copper mines alone ensured that in normal times it was not more than marginally "aid-worthy", and with sensible economic management it ought to have been able to withstand a good deal of external pressure. Unfortunately, nobody with even a nodding acquaintance with economics could have classified the management of the Allende government as anything but disastrous. To a great extent it placed itself beyond the pale for any but the most trusting—or dedicated—of creditors. But even if that had not been so, and if the blame for Chile's economic difficulties could have been laid fairly and squarely at Washington's door, Allende would surely have had small cause for complaint. It was, after all, his administration which announced its immediate determination to "expropriate imperialist capital . . . realise a policy of self-financing . . . and review, denounce and repudiate, as the case may be, treaties or agreements limiting our sovereignty, specifically the reciprocal assistance treaties, the mutual aid pacts, and others, between Chile and the United States" *(The People's Unity—Basic Programme of Government, 1970)*.

It was also his administration which promised to "repudiate the agreements between us and the International Monetary Fund" *(The People's Government—First 40 Steps, 1970)*. These bold intentions were never fully realised, it is true; but they were expressed as official policy before the United States or any other "imperialist" power had actually done anything to embarrass Allende's government. In other words, it was Allende who decided to pick the quarrel. It seems naïve, to say the least, to complain that his chosen opponents took defensive measures. What else were they expected to do?

THOSE WHO DO COMPLAIN of American action, nevertheless, might be better employed in asking why Allende got so little support from most of the governments which professed to be his friends. Except for Cuba, which offered enthusiastic (but not always practical) advice to Allende, as well as supplying arms and training for his militant Left, the world's established Marxist governments were consistently cool to the "Chilean experiment." The farthest the Soviet Union would go to show its approval was to open a 12-year credit in roubles for Chilean imports of Russian industrial goods and to agree to take a limited amount of Chilean copper for a year or two in repayment. But the hard currency loans that Chile really needed to plug the gaps that quickly opened between Allende's economic promises and performance were never forthcoming from any Marxist source. Nor was that surprising. In the nature of things, Marxist countries rarely have hard currency to spare and they were unlikely to devote what little they might have to bailing out a régime which seemed intent upon over-reaching itself in every direction.

Conceivably, Allende would have done better for himself and his country if he had simply abandoned the "free" world market altogether and taken Chile at once into the controlled trade bloc of the Communist world in the hope of getting total Soviet support. But that would have meant imposing a completely centralised economy

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and strict political control inside Chile—in short, abandoning the romantic pretence of "constitutional revolution" for the more customary revolution by decree. To his credit, perhaps, Allende was unwilling (or unable) to do that; but even if he had, it might not have worked. To support Castro's Cuba is believed to have cost Moscow the equivalent of about $1 million a day for many years. To support a similar régime in Chile would probably have cost even more. There was never the slightest sign that Mr Brezhnev, or anyone else in the Kremlin, was ready to accept such a burden.

To sum up, then, it seems to me that the idea of an American conspiracy to overthrow Allende is both unproven and unnecessary to explain his downfall. I am not saying, of course, that Washington was not relieved to see him go; although I think some American officials would have preferred to see him stumble on for some time longer in the hope that growing disillusionment would infect even his stoutest supporters and accordingly diminish the chances of his being made a martyr when nemesis finally overtook him. But in general the American attitude seems to have been a predictably cautious one:

> *Thou shalt not kill, but need'st not strive*
> *Officiously to keep alive. . . .*

A realistic Chilean government embarked on its "road to socialism" would surely have bargained for that much, and (on a truly Marxist analysis such as Allende professed) it should have expected much more—that America would move in for the kill as soon as possible. Yet while adopting a deliberately provocative stance, Allende took no steps to protect himself against possible American reprisals, declined to compromise for the sake of other Western help, and failed to provide grounds even for his supposed Marxist friends to help him.

It was magnificent, perhaps, but it was not politics. At the very least, Allende must be convicted here of a lack of realism that would probably have been fatal to any statesman anywhere.

2. The Ruling Class Conspiracy Myth

THE PICTURE of Allende being overthrown by what has been variously described as a "revolt of the privileged," a series of "bosses' strikes" or a "conspiracy of the traditional ruling class" contains so many misconceptions that it is hard to know where to begin to sort them out. One idea, however, seems basic to them all: that Allende and his Popular Unity coalition were somehow the uniquely legitimate representatives of "the People's Will." That such an odd belief should have gained any currency whatever outside purely propagandist circles is a mark of the confusion that surrounds the Chilean experience in the minds of many non-Chileans. To judge from published comments, such as those referring to the "defeat of the democratic will", some of Allende's sympathisers abroad seem even to believe that he not merely enjoyed a massive popular majority of the vote but was also the first President of his country to do so.

Yet the facts are beyond dispute. Chile was and had been for many years a functioning democracy with a constitution which vested executive power in the President and legislative power in Congress. Both in theory and in practice, no doubt, there were serious weaknesses—as revealed, for instance, in the inability of previous governments to press through social reforms as swiftly as many Chileans would have wished. But by common consent the system was the best and most stable in Latin America and it had enabled Allende himself to contest the Presidency unsuccessfully three times before he finally won it at his fourth attempt in 1970. There was no doubt of the legitimacy of that victory. But, unfortunately for those who saw it as a unique expression of "the people's will", it was gained only through a narrow plurality in which Allende obtained just over 36% of the poll. His nearest rival, only a couple of percentage points behind, was the candidate of the conservative National Party, whose members in Congress opposed Allende from the start. Another 28% went to the third candidate, a radical reformist from the Christian Democrat party, many of whose members in Congress at first gave Allende the benefit of the doubt, hoping he would modify his avowed Marxism in practice to a kind of reformism compatible with their own ideas and the existing constitution.

In the mid-term Congressional elections of March 1973, the Popular Unity coalition raised its share of the vote to 44% (although this time the "legitimacy" was suspect owing to opposition allegations of substantial electoral fraud). But the opposition parties retained a large majority in Congress where, by that time, most of the

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Christian Democrats had joined the Nationalists in outright antagonism to the President. On these facts it seems plain that, so far from representing "the People's Will", Allende never actually represented more than a substantial minority interest. Only if "the People" are identified as being those who voted for Allende, while the rest —the majority—are relegated to the status of "non-people" can any other interpretation be sustained. But that, of course, is just what is implied by the myth of the "ruling class conspiracy."

IF THERE WAS a "ruling class" in Chile it was that of the politicians and the surrounding establishment drawn mostly from the narrow upper end of Chile's prosperous middle class. Allende himself and many of his ministers and leading supporters were as much part of that group as were their political opponents. But, ironically, it was a group that often suffered less than others from Allende's socialism because its members on both sides generally possessed enough cash or property to exploit the black market at home or slip into agreeable exile if things got too rough—in any case, to survive (like Allende himself until his death) in very reasonable comfort. But the people who did most to overthrow Allende were rarely of this group at all. With the possible exception of some naval officers, the armed forces were very much apart from the establishment of any political colour; and even after Allende brought the service commanders into his government they remained aloof from, and remarkably little known by, those relatively small circles in Santiago which were accustomed to set the country's political tone.

Indeed, as events since the *coup d'état* have shown, Chile's military men—like their counterparts elsewhere—were probably as contemptuous of the politicians (and as ignorant of politics) as the politicians were of them. They had stayed outside politics for nearly 40 years, and if Allende himself had not dragged them into the whirlpool they might have been content to remain that way. But their position was made intolerable by the President's own decisions. On the one hand they were encouraged to turn a blind eye to the steady growth of illegal, para-military forces under the command of the President's friends or others who were more extreme in their revolutionary commitment. On the other hand they were required to serve in his cabinet to maintain "law and order" and reassure the country of the President's constitutional propriety. On top of that they were threatened by attempts from within the President's own circle to subvert their authority within their own forces, as in the naval conspiracy uncovered in July 1973, and the public call for a naval insurrection by Allende's friend and fellow-leader of the Socialist Party, Senator Carlos Altamirano, made only three days before the *coup*.

A surer way can hardly be imagined of provoking mutiny among responsible officers, and it is only surprising, in retrospect, that it did not happen sooner—as in most Latin American countries it surely would have done. To ascribe the mutiny thereafter to the machinations of "the ruling class" is to understand nothing, either of military men in general or of Chile's military in particular.

SIMILARLY, THE SO-CALLED "bosses' strikes" which preceded the military *coup* were, in fact, nothing of the kind. The lorry-men who paralysed half, or more, of Chile's transport by their month-long strike in September-October 1972, and their even longer strike in July-September 1973, were mostly owner-drivers who would have fitted fairly readily into the Teamsters' Union in the United States. They displayed the fierce economic and social protectionism typical of what in Europe or North America would be called the lower middle class, and they saw themselves threatened by galloping inflation and by what they believed to be the Government's intention to destroy their way of life through state control or ownership of their services. Along with the small shopkeepers who supported them—not forgetting the queue-weary housewives whose famous "Saucepan March" in Santiago was the most dramatic early sign of revolt—they might be classed as the *Poujadistes* of Chile. But by no stretch of the imagination could they be described as representatives of a "boss" or "ruling" class, or even as being especially "privileged" in a social or economic sense. Moreover, they owed little, if any, allegiance to the traditional political groupings of Chilean politics, although they obviously welcomed any support they could get from them. On the contrary, they tended to cut across the traditional spectrum and look to new leaders, whether of right or left. Thus, their principal spokesman, Senor Leon Vilarin, was actually a member of Allende's Socialist Party while others of the leadership came from the Nationalist Party ranks or from no party at all.

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The members of the various professional associations, like doctors, dentists, lawyers and airline pilots, which joined the second transport strike, were likewise not "bosses" although they were certainly, in Chilean terms, rather more "privileged." Their protest was probably more ideological than that of the lorry-men and the shopkeepers—it was usually their wives, for example, who objected most forcibly to the Government's politically-inspired changes in the school curriculum—but it was also provoked by sheer exasperation and fear at the growing threat to their professional status posed by the Government's combination of administrative inefficiency and dubious social priorities. For example, Chile's economic collapse and inflation not only threatened many doctors financially but seriously frustrated their work. Some early reports from Santiago after the *coup* made the point that hospitals were appealing urgently for bandages and drugs to treat the wounded, as if that indicated that the number of casualties must be overwhelmingly high. But bandages, drugs, and other medical supplies had been only sporadically obtainable in Chile for many months beforehand. The daily round of the pharmacies in search of the simplest medicines had become a regular feature of Santiago life; and foreign embassies had been driven to stock-pile their own supplies, imported through the diplomatic bag, for the treatment of the most normal ailments among their staffs. It was partly in the hope of ending that situation that many otherwise conscientious doctors finally joined the movement to get Allende out.

NOR SHOULD IT BE FORGOTTEN that some of the most damaging strikes of all were those of Chile's most influential blue-collar workers—the copper-miners. The last lorry-men's strike was immediately preceded by a two months' strike for higher wages by miners at El Teniente, the country's biggest mine. Because copper accounts for three-quarters of Chile's foreign earnings, that strike probably cost the country far more in real terms than the transport strike, whose costs to a great extent could be absorbed internally. Indeed, as one West European diplomat remarked to me in Santiago, the money lost in those two months at El Teniente would have more than repaid Chile's entire debt to his government—a debt which Allende at that moment was trying to reschedule for the second consecutive year.

It is true that the copper-miners were the élite of Chile's blue-collar class and, no doubt, wanted to keep it that way. To that extent, perhaps, they may be deemed "privileged"—like, say, coal miners or motor car workers in Britain; although I doubt if that is what members of the British Labour Party, or the *New Statesman*, can have had in mind in embracing the "privileged" thesis. But a more important reason for the miners' restiveness, I believe, is that although they were the most vital of all Chile's manual workers they suffered far more than most of their erstwhile comrades from the country's shattering economic decline under Allende. Unlike farm and factory workers, they could not supplement their official wages by selling the fruits of their labour on the black market. The farm worker who could take home a sack of potatoes, a few chickens, or even a side of beef, could make a good living on the black market even if his official wages remained stationary while inflation roared ahead. The factory worker who was entitled to buy a proportion of his factory's output at official fixed prices could (and did) sell that at six or ten times what he had paid as soon as he left the factory gate. But miners could hardly find ready buyers for a stolen truck-load of copper ore.[2]

Thus the copper-miners were thrust, in effect, into the same position as the lorry-men, the shopkeepers, and virtually all of Chile's salaried professional men and women: they were left more or less defenceless against the most vicious inflation the country had ever experienced.

SOME APOLOGISTS for Allende have maintained that the degree of inflation was exaggerated or, at any rate, little worse than was customary in Chile and elsewhere in Latin America. The truth is that it was far beyond anything normally endured in that continent. As little as nine months after Allende came to power, when I first visited Chile, the escudo had already fallen

[2]Although even that was not unthinkable towards the end, such was the chaos the economy had fallen into. The last time I left Chile, a week or so before the *coup*, I drove over the Andes to Argentina and at the Chilean customs post at the summit of the pass I found officials taking a large American car to pieces and laying upon the snow-covered ground around it *one ton* of copper ingots that had been hidden in various nooks and crannies of the chassis. It would have been worth around U.S. $2,000 in cash in Argentina—a fortune, by then, in Chilean terms, of about *four million* escudos on the black market.

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from 20 to 40 against the U.S. dollar on the free, or black, market. Eighteen months later, on my second visit, the Government's own figures put the rate of inflation at 130% in a year, the money issue was going up by 10% a month and the escudo had fallen to about 350 to the black U.S. dollar. By August 1973, the official inflation rate was 323% and rising fast, and the escudo was worth only 2,000 to the dollar—an effective devaluation in less than three years of 10,000%!

Nor is it enough to attribute these catastrophic rates to such adventitious or malicious factors as—and again I refer to published arguments—falling world copper prices, the normal difficulties of maintaining industrial and farm output in a time of radical political change, or deliberate American intervention.

On the last of these three I have already said enough, I hope, to show that it was far from decisive and that it was, anyway, largely self-invited. As to falling copper prices, the fact is that after a fall in the first year of Allende's Government, prices recovered until by the time of his overthrow they were 80% above the level at the time of his election. Had they not risen so steeply he would almost certainly have fallen sooner and probably would not have secured his relative, short-lived success in the mid-term elections of March 1973. The difficulties of maintaining output in a time of change, however, were real—unfortunately, far more so than Allende ever seemed to realise.

To take just two examples: copper and milk. Expropriation of the copper mines from their American owners would, no doubt, have led in itself to the withdrawal of American technicians as well as of American management with some consequent risk of losing production temporarily, at least. But this might have been overcome by the promotion of trained Chilean managers and technicians, of whom there was no shortage.

Alas, for Chile's national income, Allende not merely nationalised but deliberately politicised the mines as well. Jobs for the party boys were handed out in thousands while trained Chileans emigrated so that, after three years of Popular Unity Government, mining manpower and costs had risen by more than a third while mining output was down by about the same amount.

I take milk as the second example because it was specifically mentioned in Popular Unity election manifestos, which guaranteed "every Chilean child half-a-quart of milk daily." Here again, the government's programme of land reform, intended to break the power of Chile's remaining landlords and open the way to co-operative or state farming, might have been expected to result in some shortfall in dairy production for a year or two while the teething problems were sorted out. In fact, however, milk production dropped as if someone had simply punched a hole in the bottom of every churn in the land. At one large cooperative dairy in Temuco, one of the main milk-producing areas of Chile, the average daily winter intake of milk was about 50-60,000 gallons in 1970. By 1973 it was down to 7,000. Nor was this surprising. Apart from the fact that legal land reform had been accompanied by widespread and unchecked illegal land seizures so that too many farms were in the hands of people utterly without experience, the prices established for milk—as for most other farm products—were simply economic nonsense. Presumably in the hope of getting half-a-quart of milk for every child on the cheap, the government decreed that a gallon of milk would fetch less than half the price of one egg. Inevitably, nobody was interested in producing milk and cows were slaughtered wholesale for beef—legally or illegally—or driven over the mountains to Argentina while Allende was forced to scour the world for dried milk imports that, thanks to his policy in the copper mines, he no longer had foreign currency to pay for.

SUCH FOLLIES were repeated everywhere as the romantic gestures of self-styled revolution were preferred to facing the facts of life. While overall production in both agriculture and industry fell disastrously, Allende simultaneously attempted to redistribute the national wealth by giving Chile's poorer classes more money to spend. They were his constituency and they were properly grateful, for many of them certainly had never had much before. But you can't redistribute what you have already thrown away; and as output vanished, so domestic queues grew longer, foreign debts piled up, and the budget deficit expanded like a hydrogen balloon. A year before the final collapse I asked one of Allende's chief economic advisers what they were going to do to control a situation that was already looking critical. He replied, with commendable candour, that he really didn't know. "I know," he said, "what we ought to do—we should impose an austerity régime tomorrow, freeze wages, and ration essential supplies. But how can we? We would destroy our own political base. . . ."

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Love that Ideology

I HAVE VERY *mixed feelings about the affair. When a European periodical wanted to translate for its pages my piece on "Lady on the Barricades"* (ENCOUNTER, *July 1972*), *one of its Anglophile editors objected on the grounds that it put the English in a rather poor light, and just at the moment when the Europeans were beginning to feel the togetherness of a common historic destiny. It is true that my Oxford* Barrikadenkämpferin *(Miss Theresa Hayter) cut a pretty slight figure in my gallery of German and French (and even American) revolutionaries. They had the magniloquence of 1789 and 1848 and 1871 and 1917; she couldn't even command the vocabulary of a Winstanley or a William Cobbett. But that was my—perhaps too dialectical—point. The English alone have developed a political culture in which a proper revolutionary attitude has become impossible; they have lost the touch for the apocalypse, the feeling for final conflicts, the longing for utopia, and the expectation of paradise at a stroke. They disorder these things differently in Europe. From Théroigne de Méricourt to Ulrike Meinhof we can sense the great ravaging mythology of Revolution. I meant, of course, no disrespect by suggesting that the Englishwoman was virtuous by incapacity.*

But it could be that I miscast the roles in my dramatis personae. *I now see from the transcript of the recent trial at the Exeter Crown Court that I should have devoted myself to the political passions of Dr Bridget Rose Dugdale. She, at least, understood that the revolution begins literally at home, and she stole a fortune's worth of art treasures from the country home at Axminster, Devon, of her father, Colonel J. F. C. Dugdale. To expropriate the expropriators was no empty phrase from a dog-eared pamphlet. It was the proof of the pudding, the means test of militance. The Exeter Crown Court, of course, took a less ideological view of the matter, and Mr Justice Park found her guilty.*

BRIDGET ROSE DUGDALE *confronted bourgeois justice magnificently; Théroigne and Ulrike would have been proud of her.*

"I am certainly not going to ask you for mercy,' Dr Dugdale said to Mr Justice Park, "because I don't think it is a quality that you and your ilk know anything of." She knew how merciless and ruthless was the course of middle-class justice in the late phases of monopoly capitalism. "You will sentence me to the longest sentence you can give me without becoming the laughing-stock history will make you." Nor would the dramatic last act of history be long in coming, for Miss Dugdale's temperament shared in that great quality of all true revolutionaries: the splendid illusion of imminence. Each day was pregnant with hope. The seeds of the good future society had been implanted. The world was in birth throes. From the womb of the old would come a new creation.

Or, as she told the Crown Court: "You will do it from fear of the united strength of people of no property, brave men and true, and you are afraid of this because one day these men—and I believe it will be very shortly—will brush you and other yeomen aside and deprive you of the power and privilege you abrogate and abuse." She said all this plainly and passionately, with no trace of the Oxford honours student she once was. As one court reporter observed: "Perhaps as a symbol of commitment she embraced the manners and customs of her adopted class totally. Uneducated speech became an affectation . . . ." But for the reader of the text who can hear no accent, the tone seemed authentic enough. She was Gracchus Babeuf, after his arrest by General Bonaparte, defying the French Consulate. She was Dimitroff, in a Nazi court, unyielding to the bitter end. She was Che in Bolivia, prepared to fight his way through the jungle.

"In returning a verdict of guilty you have turned me from an intellectual recalcitrant into a freedom fighter. I don't know of a finer or better title."

And then, borrowing a phrase or two from Cleaver and Castro (or perhaps Baldwin and Guevara), she cried: "Power to the people—history will absolve us! . . ."

BUT ABSOLUTION CAME *sooner than she knew. Mr Justice Park, with a fine and surprising feeling for alienation and exploitation, suspended her two years' sentence. He felt that Bridget Rose Dugdale's lover, Walter Heaton, son of a Leeds mill-hand, had been the real culprit and that he had only been "exploiting" her in order to provide himself, his wife, and his children with a comfortable life. Heaton was sentenced to six years. And Miss Dugdale was furious—"Class justice, if I may say so", and only more awful evidence of the System's discrimination. "A poor man goes away for six years on a lesser charge; a rich girl gets two years' suspended. If I had been jailed I would have felt there was a modicum of justice in the judge's mind . . . ." Alas, we will all have to wait for the revolution until we can get the true fruits of our labour, our just deserts, to each his (or her) own.*

But at least her lover remained loyal and true to the classic scenario. When Walter Heaton, militant shop steward and court-martialled ex-Guardsman, had met her father, a colonel in the Hussars and a chief of a Lloyds syndicate, he hadn't retreated an inch and proceeded to wage the class struggle across the Devon dinner table. And now he too had his moment in court, defying the guillotine, contemptuous of the firing squad, prepared for his martyrdom. "Not since Christ," he said, "has there been a greater travesty of justice than has occurred within these four walls. We have been deprived of every little bit of right we have. Your fear, as Rose has said, is greater than ours. You cannot imprison Rose and I. We don't exist, yet we are everywhere, invincible and indestructible." He gave a clenched fist salute as he was taken from the dock.

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. . . On All Sides of the Barricades

Of Heaton she had said: "That man knows more about the world than I will ever know." Of Bridget Rose Dugdale he had said: "I am in love with her ideology." Workers of hand and brain were as one.

IN THE LIGHT OF ALL THIS **I have asked the editors of the Continental periodical to ask their translators to substitute for my portrait of "Theresa" the above sketch of "Bridget Rose" as the English Lady on the Barricades. They, too, will love her ideology.**

★

On Having Yevtushenko

THE MAIN PROBLEM *of the Salzburg seminar on "Russia & the West", at least for me, was keeping my body in the golden conference hall of Schloss Leopoldskron and my eyes off the glittering countryside (snow-capped peaks of the Salzkammergut, blue mountain lakes of Fuschl and St Wolfgang). The subsidiary problem involved the dilemma of the elaborate and expensive East-West "cultural exchanges" between the Soviet Union and Europe and America in a time of so-called* détente. *"We send them scholars to study and collect medieval Russian church madrigals," one American said bitterly, "and they swarm all over the place making notes on our computer technology . . . ".*

An economist from the L.S.E. made a helpful suggestion, namely, subjecting the whole complex to the latest variety of time-motion studies and cost-benefit analysis. A retired Foreign Office diplomat suggested subtle ways of negotiating with Bolsheviks successfully without ever really tipping one's hand. A French physicist opined, with Pascal, that all of life is imperfect and, with Montaigne, that equanimity and tranquillity were all. A German historian thought all the Russian exchangees were really spies. An Italian sociologist seemed to be arguing that the open-hearth warmth of Western life would soften the hard intellectual arteries of Russian dogmatists, would slowly liberalise a totalitarian culture and thus help preserve world peace. A professor from Amsterdam, recently in Moscow, found in the Samizdat **of "unofficial Russia" the same moral inspiration he once felt in the wartime Dutch resistance movement. A Sinologist reminded the Kremlinologists that what was good for Moscow was bad for Peking, and that a cool even-handedness was all.**

THERE WERE, THEN, *pessimists and optimists, experts who were pleased and hopeful and experts who were disillusioned and cynical. When one Scandinavian professor of literature waxed enthusiastic about the marvellous cultural vitality he found in Moscow, especially in the vast Translation Projects, he was admonished by an American professor of literature that Pasternak had sadly written, "Mayakovsky killed himself, and I go on translating. . . ." The shadow of Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, of Amalrik and Sinyavsky, darkened the week-long discussions in Salzburg.*

In the end it all remained a great puzzlement. As a Swiss wit cracked, explaining what he meant by "the Bolshoi ploy": "We have all the questions, and they have all the dancers . . . ." There was some good sense behind the bad joke. Russian experts have come to the West to study its corrupt and decadent institutions: the bourgeois enslavement of its scientists ("the torment of secrecy"); the rottenness of its cultural enterprises (TV & commercialism, the vicious censorship of the BBC, civil war on the campus); the signs of new hope in the renaissance of Marxism (from Berlin to Berkeley). Where was exchange? There sat three celebrated scholars in Russian history—Richard Pipes, Leonard Schapiro, Alexander Dallin—confessing that in their chosen fields of study they wouldn't even be allowed within a thousand Russian versts *of a Leningrad library or a Moscow archive. But at least one vigorous American lady was happy, a professional archivist, who had been challenged by the chaos and confusion of a hundred million pieces of paper in the Soviet collections, without classification, cross-references, or card-catalogues. She was "exchanged" a dozen times in a dozen years, and now she is an honoured visitor in the U.S.S.R.; with a Yankee determination that once won the West, she has succeeded in putting Eastern things in proper order.*

FOR THE REST THERE WAS **a mournful Moussorgsky note about the deliberations in Salzburg. Max Hayward, the Oxford translator of** Dr Zhivago **and** Ivan Denisovich, **listened (as we all did) with rapt attention to the long dramatic monologue by Edward Albee, as if he were acting out a scene from "Who's Afraid of Andrei Sakharov?" Hayward tried to counter Albee's liberal despair by putting in a modest plea for the usefulness of any kind of exchanges between Russia and the West. "Fifteen years ago," he said, "when we invited Yevtushenko, we got Surkov. Five years later, we got Yevtushenko and Surkov. Five years after that, we got Yevtushenko! Isn't that some progress? . . ."**

Whereupon Albee suggested that there was still some room for further progress. "Perhaps in five years' time we can invite Yevtushenko and not have to have him at all."

★

That Sinking Feeling

I HAD NOT *intended to write about the days in Venice. The city was magical in the October mist; but the incomparable pages, in James Morris' book, on flood waters in the Piazza San Marco and the hazy outlines of the* palazzi *on the Grand Canal made any jottings quite superfluous. As for the conference I listened in on—100 academics pondering the "emergency" which has afflicted European and American universities in the last decade—it seemed to speak for itself. Few talk-fests of this kind that I can remember had its special quality of pertinence and eloquence; and more than that, a*

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Precisely. In the end, rather than do that they plunged on down the primrose path of promises and illusions and practically destroyed the country. The "ruling class conspiracy" was the gloss that they and their supporters put upon the reality of their own miscalculations.

3. The Myth of the Constitutional Revolutionary

HERE WE COME to the crux of Allende's policies and character about which, finally, all the other arguments revolve. Was he a genuine constitutionalist? Was he a true revolutionary? Was he—could he ever have been—both?

Allende himself, of course, admitted no doubts. Repeatedly, he insisted that he was a revolutionary and a Marxist, and that he intended to establish at least the preconditions for what he told Régis Debray would be "total, scientific Marxist socialism." Equally repeatedly, he proclaimed his faith that he could achieve this end by constitutional means, through the ballot box and all it implied. That was, after all, to be the distinctive "Chilean road to socialism" of which so many people outside Chile cherished such high hopes.

But no hindsight is required to see that both theory and practice were riddled with contradictions. Revolutions are born of, or generate, sectional conflict—a fact of political life that Allende acknowledged every time he spoke of "overthrowing" what he called the "bourgeois" state. But a democratic constitution rests upon consensus—a basic acceptance of the fact that the State represents more than a merely sectional interest. The second permits reform, but the first denies it; and there is no way of reconciling the two.

All Allende's practical difficulties followed from this simple distinction. Taken seriously, his constitutionalism meant that his programme could only succeed if a majority would actually vote for it. But, elected as he was with only just over a third of the popular vote and with a large majority of Congress against him, Allende had neither a democratic nor an administratively effective mandate for his revolution. Indeed, in a parliamentary rather than a presidential democracy, he would probably never have been able to begin.

If he was to succeed within his six-year term of office even in opening the door to revolution, let alone establishing it as accomplished fact, he had to transform his minority into a majority. But how to do it? For, if words meant anything, Allende's had to mean that he intended to replace the existing, reformable constitution of Chile with another that would be, of its Marxist nature, irreversible. In other words, a system that was admittedly democratic was to be used to build another that would be effectively dictatorial. This was asking the majority to hang itself from its own gallows; and, not surprisingly, it declined.

ALLENDE'S ATTEMPTS to overcome this basic illogicality in his position were precisely what ensured his ultimate downfall. Refusing to abandon either his revolutionary rhetoric or his professed constitutionalism he was forced to rely

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certain sense of intellectual fraternity which derived from the embattled experiences of an "unhappy few" trying valiantly to hold out against the ideological and governmental follies of the day.

But then I caught up with the reports in the world press. A flashy American news magazine, brightly superficial as always, found the rather formidable gathering of professors (which included, among others, Paul Seabury, C. Vann Woodward, Richard Lowenthal, Edward Shils, Donald Macrae, Rolf Dahrendorf, François Bourricaud, Max Beloff, S. M. Lipset, Robert McKenzie), "a parade of Mr Chipses." An otherwise admirably cosmopolitan German weekly sent an inward-looking feuilletonist who could only take umbrage at the widespread shock expressed at the Teutonic illiberalism at a number of German universities (Berlin, Bremen, Heidelberg). The educational supplement of a famous English "newspaper of record" offered a record of the occasion which was tendentiousness compounded by inaccuracy.

Are all reports of all events in the world press as unreliable and disorienting as this? One naïvely goes on accepting what the papers say; the verisimilitude is almost taken for granted, except when one happens to have been there and can sense what a shadow falls between the words and the realities. What was that "Brass Check" for, which Upton Sinclair, in his old novel about the corruptions of the press, used to award? For intellectual waywardness? or professional incompetency? The queue nowadays for ignoble prize-winners seems to get longer and longer. Or was it only Venice that left me with a sinking feeling of wetness?

M.J.L.

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more and more upon political illusionism. His sleight-of-hand was often remarkable, as he sought to outwit the opposition majority in Congress by exploiting the letter of the constitution, using every legal loophole to force upon them measures they did not want. But in the process, inevitably, he destroyed the constitution's spirit, so that his opponents became as ruthless as he was. At the start he won considerable opposition support in Congress for needed changes like the nationalisation of the copper mines, land reform, and the state's takeover of banks and major industries—evidence that the democratic consensus could and would work within the existing constitution. But, at the end, not a single member of the opposition majority would cast a vote in his support. They voted unanimously to condemn his "habitual illegalities" and were even joined by the Supreme Court in accusing him of disregarding the rule of law. He had cut away the middle ground of Chilean politics, wrecked the democratic consensus, and begotten the reality of counter-revolution through his own addiction to revolutionary slogans.

Equally inevitable was the economic breakdown, which came from Allende's attempts to enlarge his popular base outside the political institutions. Here his plan was two-fold: to buy political support among "the People" through massive wage increases and other benefits and at the same time to squeeze the middle class into submission, or even flight from the country, through wholesale nationalisation of their interests and the appointment of his own men to all significant civil-service jobs. The two simply cancelled each other out; for while the first part of the plan raised vast new expectations and demands, the second diminished the country's capacity to meet them. The whirling spiral of inflation followed as a *necessary* result of Allende's political confusions.

THESE BASIC CONTRADICTIONS were compounded by the fragmented nature of Allende's support. His Popular Unity coalition was far from united. Its majority element was Allende's own Socialist Party—a body that bore little resemblance beyond its name to most of the democratic socialist parties of Europe which so enthusiastically espoused its cause. It was, in fact, a revolutionary Marxist party that began as a splinter of the more bureaucratic and Stalinist Chilean Communist party in the 1930s, and in recent years had acquired a fiery "New Left" wing as well. Several of its leaders, like Senator Altamirano, and many of its rank and file, constantly urged Allende to "speed up the revolution" without much regard for constitutional niceties. The smallest element of the coalition was the Christian radicals of various persuasions, some of whom hoped to offer a bridge to the centre of Chilean politics by cooperating with the left wing of the Christian Democrats, but none of whom ever attained positions of real influence. The coalition's sheet anchor was the Communist Party which, as business and administration slipped into chaos, became increasingly important as a source of discipline and strategic thinking.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN hard enough to drive this *troika* anyway without either overstepping the constitutional limits of government or antagonising one or other of its elements and thereby jeopardising the only "democratic" base the revolution had. But Allende had also to contend with the still more militant left outside the coalition, led by the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), which insisted on revolution now, and by violence if necessary—as, in MIR's view, it was.

Here Allende's professed constitutionalism was revealed as, at best, equivocal. He officially rejected MIR's violence, yet he never permitted the Army to root out their para-military groups. When they stigmatised his land-reform programme as "inadequate" and seized hundreds of farms at gun-point he rebuked them in occasional speeches but did nothing to reverse their actions.[3]

When they hi-jacked lorry-loads of valuable manufactures, to raise funds by selling them on the black market, he rarely tried to redress the crime. The Left said this was because the MIR truly represented "the People" against whom Allende dared not act. But the truth, I fear, was more squalid. For one thing, the MIR had close friends in the Socialist Party and in Allende's own entourage whom the President did not want to offend. For another, as long as their activities did not actually split the Popular Unity coalition, it was often convenient to see them pushing along

[3] Indeed, as I discovered for myself on a visit to southern Chile nine months after Allende's elections, local police forces there were under specific instructions not to attempt to restore the farms to their legal owners. See also Robert Moss's report in ENCOUNTER, "Allende's Chile", August 1973, and Alistair Horne's "Commandante Pepe", July 1971.

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the revolution by unconstitutional means while Allende denounced them in his role as a constitutionalist.

It was not as if Allende was unable to deal with the MIR when he had to. For example, when a *Mirista* force blockaded the Philips television factory in Santiago in 1973 after an unsuccessful attempt to hi-jack a lorry-load of TV sets, they were allowed by the Government to remain unmolested for ten days, although a police post was just across the road. Yet when diplomatic representations were made by the Dutch *chargé d'affaires* with the hint that his country's financial aid might have to be reconsidered if this harassment of a Dutch enterprise continued, the *Miristas* were hustled away without a shot in 24 hours.

A SIMILAR EQUIVOCATION was evident in Allende's adoption of a personal armed bodyguard—the first in memory to accompany a Chilean President. It is true that the extreme Right in Chile was quick to threaten violence as a response to Allende's proclaimed revolution, and Allende himself always maintained that he needed protection. But right-wing para-military groups were never as big or as highly organised as those on the Left; and, in any case, the proper reaction of a constitutionally-minded President would surely have been to call upon his state security forces to protect him.

Instead, Allende formed a personal unit, known as "the Group of Friends of the President." Trained, armed, and partly manned by Cubans, it was led by known revolutionaries, sympathetic to the MIR, including Allende's son-in-law. The existence of such a group at the very centre of the State was not merely a provocation to the established security forces and an affront to Chilean tradition, it was also an implied rejection of the principle of constitutional rule.

DOUBTS ABOUT the real depth of Allende's constitutionalism were raised also by his personal history and his language, both of which suggested a romantic attachment to violence. He was, after all, a founder and first president of the Latin American Solidarity Organisation, created in Havana in the 1960s and dedicated to the encouragement of armed insurrection throughout the continent. He promised to "paint Santiago with blood" in 1970 if Congress declined to ratify his election as President, and he repeatedly tried to intimidate the opposition, inside and outside Congress, with the threat of civil war. These were not the actions or the sentiments of a man dedicated to constitutional change, except as a matter of expediency.

On the other hand, it was hard to see Allende as a genuine revolutionary. He never looked anything but the complete bourgeois gentleman. A *bon viveur*, florid but well-groomed, a snappy dresser, with a twinkling eye for the ladies and a good deal of personal charm, his strongest political card was his skill in tactical manoeuvre. But as a strategist, a thinker, a man with a real message, he was unconvincing. Towards the end, as he appeared with increasing frequency on the presidential balcony in Santiago to address chanting crowds of his supporters with revolutionary platitudes, he seemed to me to lose all contact with reality, to have become an actor in love with his revolutionary part rather than a serious leader who knew where he was going.

IN RETROSPECT, I am inclined to think this was always the truth of the matter with Allende. Basically, he was a political romantic, dealing in sensations rather than sense. He enjoyed his hour upon the stage but he never properly assessed the forces he was dealing with, either for or against him. He raised expectations on his own side without commanding the means to satisfy them, and he encouraged opposition on the other side by his use of a revolutionary rhetoric whose threats he also could not fulfil.

At best he was muddle-headed; and time may show that he was deliberately deceitful. Certainly he managed to deceive a lot of people, including himself. But in the end reality taught its own, hard lessons. That you can't be a democrat *and* a revolutionary—at least, not in a society that is already admittedly democratic. That you can't be anti-American *and* expect the Americans to help you. That you can't pose as the people's leader *and* kick most people in the teeth. That you can't conscript soldiers into politics *and* expect them to remain apolitical. That you can't have inflation roaring out of sight *and* maintain a base for social welfare. That, in short, the real world is not Cloud-cuckoo-land. Down here, you just can't have your cake *and* eat it.

It is sad that such elementary lessons should have to be taught yet again at such tragic cost in Chile. But it is alarming that so many people elsewhere should evidently fail to grasp that they are the lessons.

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Column

I FEEL SURE that others as well as myself were interested in George Watson's article, "Were the Intellectuals Duped?", in last month's issue of ENCOUNTER; but I wonder if others did not also feel, like myself, that despite Mr Watson's ample documentation of his thesis, there was something wrong with his argument and that, however convincingly it was presented, things were not really as he claimed them to be.

Mr Watson's thesis was precisely that the left-wing intellectuals of the 1930s of whom he was writing were not dupes. On the contrary, they were clear-sighted, tough, cynical Marxists and Communists who knew exactly what they were doing and saying, and if we have any doubts of this, Mr Watson claims, we have only to read their own words to know what they were up to. They were in no way deceived about the true state of affairs in the Soviet Union during the Great Terror. They knew exactly what Stalin was doing, which was exterminating the class enemy, and fully approved of it; and given the chance this is what they would have done themselves in their own countries, condemning millions to death with the same icy indifference as Stalin himself. They were not the victims of generous and Utopian illusions about the Soviet Union and the way communism comes to, and maintains itself in, power. This, says Mr Watson firmly, is a myth, invented by people who have not done their homework, and ought to know better. Rather, the left-wing poets and writers were, in intention at least, murderous executioners, their fingers itching on the trigger as they waited for the opportunity to dispose of their enemies as Stalin had disposed of his.

TO ANYONE who in the 1930s knew the writers from whom Mr Watson quotes so liberally—Auden, Spender, MacNeice, Day Lewis *et al.*—there is something so inherently improbable about Mr Watson's picture of them that at first one is tempted to laugh. The idea of Stephen Spender as an icy doctrinaire, a kind of literary St Just, of Louis MacNeice as an avenging angel of Communism, has all the elements of farce in it. In the role of executioner, actual or potential, they would have carried about as much conviction as Morecambe and Wise, and I hasten to add that I say this out of old affection and not as a reproach. As for Brecht, who also figures largely in Mr Watson's gallery of intellectual killers, and whom I also came to know, he was a very different kettle of fish. A greater writer and a greater poet than any of them, he had a certain vein of steely didacticism which might indeed have made it possible for him, under appropriate circumstances, to carry out those punitive measures which he glorifies in his play, *Die Massnahme*. But this is only to say how very different he was from the others, not how alike they were; and it seems to me a singular failure on Mr Watson's part that he should regard them as essentially birds of the same species, singing the same murderous song.

Of course, Mr Watson might reply that he does not actually claim that the left-wing poets of the '30s would personally have carried out mass exterminations with their own hands, but only that they consciously adhered to doctrines which justified such measures as a political necessity; and he quotes their own words to show that they did.

I am almost inclined to think that Mr Watson has read too much poetry for his own good, if that were possible; but it is rather, I think, that he mistakes the nature of what poetry can tell us, or teach us, and the kind of evidence we can derive from it about the beliefs or the personalities of those who write it. It is a mistake, for instance, to suppose that one can argue, as Mr Watson consistently does, directly from a poem, or even a number of poems, to the intellectual beliefs of a poet. If one could, one might have to conclude that the poet and the lunatic really are akin, not in a metaphorical but a clinical sense.

Poems are not made up of atomic propositions which have a one-to-one correspondence with what a poet believes to be true. Poets are apt to value ideas, not so much for their truth, as for the use they can make of them, for their potential as raw material for poetry; and we can learn more from the way in which they manipulate and exploit ideas than from the content of the ideas themselves. Poets also have a curious capacity for holding to mutually contradictory ideas at the same time. That is precisely why they are able to see identities in them to which the rest of us are blind. Metaphor, after all, is at the very heart of poetry, and *what is metaphor but an image of identity in* difference?

FOR ALL THESE REASONS, it is impossible to treat poems, and, even more, disconnected fragments of poems, as if they were events in an autobiography; and that is why, I think, in Mr Watson's version, the poets of the '30s appear so grotesquely and laughably out of character.

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What Mr Watson underrates is the capacity of poets to assume identities which are not their own in order to make poetry out of them. They have a kind of higher frivolity which sometimes escapes their academic critics. But if it is not understood we are not likely to understand either poets or their works. Acquaintance with poets, which has been one of the lasting pleasures of my life, has convinced me that there is a sense in which we ought not to take them seriously and perhaps they do not do so themselves.

THERE ARE, however, more specific reasons why I think Mr Watson wrong in the picture he presents of the fellow-travelling poets of the 1930s—whether as victims or as executioners. He grasps too readily at the straw offered by what Mr David Caute has called "the fetish of the party card." Of course, Mr Caute was perfectly right in saying that there were many fellow-travellers who were far more deeply committed, emotionally and intellectually, than many card-carrying members. I knew card-carrying members in Berlin who took it as much for granted as belonging to a sports club. But this is not the same thing as saying that all fellow-travellers were so committed. Louis MacNeice, for instance, never had anything more than the most marginal commitment to Communism or to Marxism, or indeed to any political ideology. His aloof and critical spirit did not lend itself to any discipline imposed by others; nor was anyone ever less of a dupe, either of the illusion that the Soviet Union was an earthly paradise, or of the equal and opposite one that the "necessary murder" provides a way to political salvation.

I myself have always thought that what was true of Louis was also true, to a not much smaller extent, of Auden, Spender and Day Lewis, even though both Spender and Day Lewis were, for a time, card-carrying members of the party. In all of them there remained an irreducible residue of feeling, habits of mind, ways of thought which could not be fitted into the iron framework of party ideology, and, in the end, though in varying circumstances, it proved to be irrepressible.

THIS WAS NOT an entirely admirable feature of their love affair with Communism and the Communist party; because it was, in part, a refusal to accept that ultimate self-sacrifice which the party demands of its true disciples. They did not aspire to the martyr's crown of total self-abnegation. It was impossible, for instance, to talk to Brecht without at once realising what an intellectual and emotional abyss divided him from our English literary comrades; he spoke a language which came from the other side of the abyss. Yet even in Brecht, whose mind was subtle, dialectical, ambivalent, in a way which none of our left-wing writers ever achieved, there were reservations and self-protective devices of more than Jesuitical complexity which never ceased to astonish and bedazzle one. *Die Massnahme* can indeed be read as a glorification of the punitive measures required when a communist fails to follow the party line; it can also be read as a kind of text-book exposition of a particular problem in morality. It is for the audience to commit itself, not Brecht.

Perhaps this is only to say that so many of the left-wing friends and companions of my youth were, after all, ineradicably English, if not by race, at least by tradition, upbringing, and education (though there was always something in MacNeice's cold eye which reminded one that he was irretrievably a Celt). But their Englishness was not, as Mr Watson suggests, merely a matter of being middle class and being educated at public schools and ancient universities. The English mind is essentially a pragmatic, empirical, and sceptical one. The English are all foxes, not hedgehogs. They do not take easily to those large, universal, metaphysical and philosophical systems of which the continent is so productive and of which Marxism is perhaps the last heir. Somehow, for the English, reality keeps leaking in, and, in the '30s, it was the specifically English reality which so stubbornly refused to conform to the Marxist scenario.

It was very hard, in a sober mood, however much one tried, to see Mr Stanley Baldwin as a bloated capitalist, in the style of George Grosz, sucking the life blood of the poor; even harder to envisage the British Communist Party as the most advanced cadre of a revolutionary working class. Indeed, it was the British working class itself which refused to behave as it should, continuing to vote Conservative even during the depths of the great Depression, watching football matches when it should have been on the barricades, for the most part sublimely indifferent to the fate of its comrades abroad.

To remain a Communist and a Marxist under these conditions it was necessary to invent a different proletariat. As Brecht once ironically suggested to the East German Government, the people had proved unsatisfactory and should be dismissed and another one appointed. It was to this task that the left-wing poets of the '30s addressed themselves. The best of their poems are those which celebrate the virtues, not of execution or extermination, but of fraternity, of comradeship, of the love of man for man; all those features of a world of the imagination which were so obviously lacking in the real one.

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IN THIS, I DO NOT THINK they were any more mistaken than millions of other men and women throughout the world who in the '30s committed themselves to what one may call the politics of hope rather than of despair. Hope is not necessarily an illusion, even if it proves to be a false one, and to hope and have one's hopes cheated is not necessarily to be a dupe, much less an executioner. It is not when hope flourishes, but when it is extinguished that people take to the gun.

IF THERE is one thing that distinguishes the left-wing writers of the '30s from their successors in recent decades, it is precisely the element of hope, which seems naïve and almost childish today, which was so strong in them and is so absent today. In this they were truly representative of their own generation as opposed to its equivalent at the present time. Their hope was largely based upon what seemed to be a viable alternative to the capitalist system, as exemplified in the Soviet Union. It was taken for granted that the alternative not only did but must possess the virtues, political, social and economic, in which the capitalist system was so evidently lacking. But this belief was reached by a process of abstract and rather primitive reasoning rather than as a result of study or observation of actual conditions in the Soviet Union. Indeed the English left-wing poets of the time were strangely uninterested and incurious about the realities of life in Russia. It was as if they had a subconscious suspicion that the more they knew about them, the harder it would be to sustain the hope they had placed in them.

Mr Watson is wrong in thinking either that conditions, actual or imagined, in the Soviet Union had a determining effect on the poetical or the literary opinions of the left-wing poets of the 1930s or that they were well-informed about them. Russia, for most of them (unlike Brecht, who knew very well what Moscow was like and was determined never to be trapped there), was a blank space on the map which they could fill in according to their fancy. None of them knew Russian; they knew nothing of Russian history, except perhaps Trotsky's *History of the Revolution*; and they did not have the benefit of that immense effort of study and research which has been applied to the Soviet Union since World War II. It is all very well for Malcolm Muggeridge to write that anyone who read Trotsky had all the material for understanding the significance of terror in communist ideology and its practical application to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, Muggeridge had read Trotsky before he went to Moscow; but he still had not realised what terror meant until he had seen its results for himself. It remains to his credit, however, that having seen them he immediately understood that they were not accidental and unfortunate by-products of the Soviet system, but the direct effect of ideology applied in practice. He put two and two together, as it were, and came up with the right answer. Many did not.

HOPE, FAITH, and that nearly infinite capacity for ignoring realities which is the product of an almost exclusively literary education enabled most left-wing writers of the '30s to maintain their belief in revolution despite all the evidence available to them. Yet, despite this, that belief was, almost unknown to them, steadily eroded by the pressure of events. The classical account of this process of erosion is to be found in Arthur Koestler's autobiography. Koestler, admittedly, is the extreme, one might almost say the limiting, case. Intellectually agile enough to be at home in the darkest labyrinths of the dialectic, with a profound death wish which made him ready for total self-sacrifice, he also had the opportunity, which few shared, to travel through the length and breadth of Russia in the throes of the collectivisation of agriculture. As he himself records, the extremes of human suffering which he witnessed had no effect whatsoever on his ideological preconceptions. But this was not because he accepted them as an executioner, as a part of the "necessary murder." It was because, rather, he quite literally could not see what was lying under his nose. And yet the impressions he unconsciously collected on his journey lay dormant in him until many years later they combined with his own experiences of the working of the party machinery to produce that species of conversion which he underwent in his death cell in Spain.

KOESTLER'S EXPERIENCE provides a pattern which many people's lives followed in the 1930s, though hardly in quite so dramatic a way. He himself has recorded and analysed it brilliantly, and yet even so there remains at the heart of it something which even today seems obscure and mysterious. But certainly it was far too long, complicated, and tortuous a process to be dismissed with the kind of simplifications Mr Watson indulges in. If one had to accept his crude dichotomy, one would have to see that the writers he discusses were certainly more victims, and willing victims, than executioners. But, more than either, they sometimes remind one rather of badly cast actors stumbling through roles for which they were fundamentally ill-suited by training and temperament. Perhaps that is why they could divest themselves of their parts so completely when at long last the curtain was rung down.

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Cambridge in the 1950s

Memoirs of an Economist—By HARRY G. JOHNSON

I FIRST ARRIVED at Cambridge in 1945. The Canadian Army had excited a series of riots by its troops in Aldershot, due to its inability to claim the shipping to send them home immediately as expected, and then decided to cool them off by sending the longest-service of them home on ships that suddenly and not inexplicably became available, and as many as possible of the remainder who possessed adequate educational qualifications back to school on the spot. So I arrived in Cambridge in October 1945, in my corporal's uniform, which I wore for most of the rest of the year. When I finally tried to enter the college dining-hall in resplendent new mufti, the Head Porter stopped me and said "Sir, you must wear a gown—otherwise the gentlemen will think you're a freshman"—and kindly lent me one for that evening. Fortunately I was not the only Canadian soldier there—there were nine other Canadian soldiers—or I might have felt either lonely or snubbed. There were also 150 American GIs there, and they bore, as usual, the brunt of discrimination against North Americans. (Nowadays, with no British-style uniforms and not much recognisable Canadian accent to distinguish them from Americans, Canadians often find themselves bitterly resentful at bearing the discrimination which the British love to inflict on ordinary Americans.)

PROFESSOR HARRY G. JOHNSON *holds chairs in economics at both the University of Chicago and the London School of Economics. He is acknowledged as one of the most brilliant technical economists of our day. Among his more general essays are the following in recent numbers of* ENCOUNTER: *"Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Economics" (April 1971), "A Word to the Third World" (October 1971) and "The Achievement of P. T. Bauer" (November 1972).*

Cambridge was quite a change from the academic background I came from, the University of Toronto, which functioned in those days with fairly small classes, and instruction mostly by informal lectures and seminars. Cambridge ran on a different system—and still does—whereby the lectures are few in number from any one individual staff member, and very formal. Most of the weight of the instruction is carried by a weekly hour you spend, alone or in small numbers, with someone known there as your "supervisor" (and in Oxford as your "tutor") for whom you write an essay every week for discussion in your "supervision" or "tutorial." Moreover, examinations were set on the field and not on the lecture series, and would probably be dominated by what the external examiner happened to think were important current problems. This gave us an extra degree of freedom from attending lectures that was difficult for the more regimented North American to get used to. I played it safe, Canadian-style, and attended most of the lectures. My colleagues did not suffer visibly, given their ambitions and work capacity, from doing without most of the supervisions as well as most of the lectures.

On the personal side, I was allotted a room (actually a bedroom-study, living-room, and kitchenette for making tea and soup) in Jesus College. I had not been forethoughted enough to stipulate King's College, which shows something of my lack of understanding of economics at the time, since King's was where A. C. Pigou was and Gerland Shove was and J. M. Keynes still had rooms: in short, where the action was. Jesus College did not even have a supervisor. I was paired with a lively little American whose interest in economics was shown by his classic remark "Cambridge is a great place: Yuh get yur own who'house" (referring to the fact that he could

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entertain girls in his room); but I soon arranged to halve my supervision hour with him and to be supervised alone.

IT WAS A PRETTY MISERABLE winter. There was no coal, and they managed also to contrive a shortage of bread. In England, then, with a lack of central heating, coal and bread were substitutes. You could heat yourself either internally with bread and marmalade or externally with coal. One ate starch five times a day and relished proximity to a roaring fire. I can remember doing my studying in my army overcoat and gloves and trying to leaf through the pages of *The General Theory* while I shivered away in my little set of rooms.

I was assigned for a supervisor Maurice Dobb, the well-known Communist intellectual, and this was probably the saving virtue of being at Jesus College, because everybody else was involved in the fight over liquidity preference *versus* loanable funds. Dobb, having no intellectual commitment to either side, was capable of being dispassionate when it came to discussing those issues. So I did not wind up brainwashed one way or the other on that fundamental issue, as it was put to us, of whether liquidity preference or loanable funds was the only possible approach to monetary theory.

Well, I went to lectures, not being able to shake off the habit of a North American education and the belief that lecturers somehow were there to teach us something—a great mistake, I now realise. And the first lectures I heard were by D. H. Robertson. I sat down on a sort of bench, and I looked down at the desk where I was going to put my paper to take my notes, and staring me in the face was a deeply carved inscription, *"Pigou mumbles."* And then Robertson came in and talked. They were brilliant lectures, but you had to know at least enough economics for a Ph.D. before you could understand them. In his youth he had been quite an eminent amateur actor, and his delivery was beautiful. It was not until you got to know him better that you realised that every single word had been written out. He allowed no questions. Toward the end of the year he would announce that anyone who wished to write out a question was welcome to do so, and he would take them home and write out his answers and read them to us the next time.

He and many other Cambridge people at that time remarked that the lecturing load was very light. We used to refer to it, when I became a member of the faculty, as "the 40-hour year." Our standard lecturing commitment was 40 hours, and when spread over the whole winter it was indeed no burden—something like two lectures a week for two terms out of three. But Robertson was in the habit, as many other Cambridge people were, of writing those lectures out fresh every year. They would take the whole month of September and spend it writing and rewriting. The lectures did not turn out all that differently, as I found out by going to some of Robertson's lectures after I returned to Cambridge. But it seemed to give them pleasure to do this and a feeling of assurance.

I asked Maurice Dobb about this after I became a lecturer, and he said that he wrote his out every time, every year. But in his case he did not have any elocutionary talent. He used to read these things in a flat monotone, and I went to those lectures out of a sense of duty, which was certainly required. They were supposed to be about the Economics of Socialism, which was a fairly hot topic in 1945–46; and he would start off with a large crowd of 40 or 50 students. Towards the end there would be nobody left except myself and a very small band of Communist Party members who felt obliged to reciprocate the services that he had done for the party, by listening to the lectures. They were mostly about the 1930s arguments about socialism, which started with von Mises' assertion that socialism simply "could not work" because you could not "coordinate all those decisions". And quite a number of socialists had set out to challenge this by showing that "Yes, indeed, you could coordinate decisions—by making a socialist economy work like a capitalist economy with prices serving as signals to decentralised managers. . . ." This was a rather abstruse debate involving at least three peoole who had published on the subject, and it took the whole term to work through it all. One never really discovered what would happen in a communist society except that it would indubitably be "far better"—a matter on which, if you lasted the course, you would have at least a few doubts.

THERE WAS ANOTHER LECTURER who, while not involved in such fantastically fundamental issues, produced more or less the same impression. This was a man called J. W. F. Rowe, who was by way of being an expert on commodity markets. He would take a whole hour to explain to us the difference between retailers and wholesalers. This left one plenty of time for writing letters home; I cleared

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off most of my relatives during those hours.

The only exciting lecturer was Joan Robinson; and this, again, was a bit of a surprise. We had had female lecturers at Toronto who appeared nicely dressed and perfumed and wearing skirts and other kinds of recognisable sex symbols. But we all assembled for Joan Robinson's lecture—and in strode this rather mousy-looking woman, wearing a sort of blouse-and-vest combination on top and a pair of slacks down below, and sandals. She proceeded to put an elbow on the lectern, peered out at us, and started off in a rather flat monotone. "Well, it's very difficult these days to lecture on economic theory because now we have both socialist countries and capitalist countries. . . ." Everyone thought, "Gosh, what a wonderful new idea!" I found out from one of my students some ten years later that he heard her start her lecture course exactly the same way, and he came to me and said, "Gosh, what a wonderful new idea!" At any rate, you got used to the image that she was not recognisable as a female of the species and did not behave like one, and that was one of the main lessons one had to learn. Once she came to Chicago to talk to my students there; they looked at her and decided, "Well, we'll certainly show this old grandmother where she gets off." After they picked their heads up off the floor, having been ticked off with a few well-chosen blunt squelches, they took a much more respectful attitude.

Even at that time the fight between the liquidity preference and loanable funds groups was going on. Robertson had a little coterie of people who believed in loanable funds. Unfortunately for him, they were not really sharp theorists. They were mostly involved in peripheral subjects like industrial organisation (on which the British have always been extremely weak), labour economics, and other similar subjects, so about all they could do was declare their faith and manoeuvre behind the scenes in the academic politics of the place, trying to get more of their kind elected to positions and keep out the opposite crowd. The Keynesians were the sharp theorists, and they made their points by caricaturing an orthodoxy that no one equally sharp (apart from Robertson) was there to defend.

Things went on like that. We were, I am afraid, not paying too much attention. It was too easy to drink beer and argue politics. As is well known, English public licensing hours are rather barbarous; but they do have the one great advantage that the pubs open at 10.30 in the morning, which makes it possible to cut a lot of lectures and feel no pain. They stay open until afternoon (when one was supposed to go out and play healthy field sports), and reopen an hour or so before dinner. Of course, you have to stop drinking at 10 o'clock at night, unless you can afford your own private stock; but that did not make too much difference because in those days you had to be in by midnight or you got either gated or sent down (unless you knew how to climb over the walls). There were well-charted routes by which one could get into and out of colleges, including the female colleges, after midnight. Actually, the rule in the women's colleges was that, after 7 p.m., all men are beasts. Up until 7 p.m. they were all angels, and the girls simply had to learn to live with that routine and practise love in the afternoon.

IT WAS DURING THAT YEAR that I saw Maynard Keynes for the one and only time. They had in Cambridge a "Political Economy Club" (it had been founded by Keynes) which had a set of rules based on the society of the "Cambridge Apostles." The Apostles included many of the people who later figured in "the Bloomsbury group" and a great many famous people in various walks of life. One of the rules was that somebody would read a paper, and before the paper was read those present would draw numbers from a hat. The numbers would run from 1 to 6, and this would determine the order in which you spoke. If there were more people present than six then there were blanks in the hat, and if you drew one at the Political Economy Club you could heave a sigh of relief and devote yourself to getting close enough to Robertson's coal fire to keep warm. Robertson was pretty much of a miser, and the coal fire was always lit but it never generated too much warmth. So that if you arrived a little late for the meeting you found yourself frozen, and you had to follow the lecture carefully as you shifted from foot to foot, or else you spent so much of your effort combating the cold that you could not follow what was going on. It made a great difference whether you had a number or not. If you had a number *and* came late, you were really in trouble.

I was eventually invited to join this club. The membership included only those students who were *2-1's* or *firsts*, that is *top B* or *A* students, and I was invited to come along to my first meeting: Keynes was the guest. They passed

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the hat and I drew number one, which was a pretty daunting experience. I spent the time that Keynes was talking trying desperately to think of something that might be wrong with his argument; and failing that, something that might be right, but could somehow be still more right, if you follow what I mean. My colleagues were kind and they offered to take my number and give me a blank, since it was rather unfair to put me up against Keynes the first night. But I refused manfully to accept this lifeline that was being offered to me. The paper he gave is the one that was published posthumously on whether or not there would be a long-run dollar shortage. He argued fairly convincingly (at least as far as he was concerned and we were concerned) that there would not be. His argument depended very heavily on an appeal to the long-run classical mechanism, basically the influence of balance-of-payments surpluses on money, wages, and so forth.[1]

Keynes was a brilliant phenomenon; he was a sparkling man and a great experience for me. The speaker had the good fortune of sitting right beside Robertson's hearth fire, so he had no trouble keeping warm. Keynes sat there in an arm-chair with his legs slumped out in front of him—and he had very long legs; he was in some ways, physically, a slightly miniaturised John Kenneth Galbraith. He had some notes on the table beside him, but he never seemed to look at them. He gave us a very elegant talk, beautifully constructed, every sentence a piece of good English prose and every paragraph cadenced—just a wonderful performance. But it was in the discussion afterwards that I learned so much from him. I got up and struggled through a rather lame argument. It was to the effect that, given the availability of lots of farm labour in the United States, it would take some time before the pressure of demand for American industrial products would force up the general level of wages, just because the labour could be drawn off the farms. I was not really convinced of this myself, particularly after having listened to Keynes. But he was very kind, and he picked up the point and made something of it. And I noticed that this was what he did. One of the secrets of his charm was that when it was a student, he would go out of his way to make something flattering out of what the young man had said. If the student had made an absolute ass of himself, Keynes would still find something in it which he would transform into a good point. It might well be the very opposite of what the student had said; but the student was so relieved to find that he was not being cut to pieces that he was really impressed by the brilliance of what he was told he *had* said. On the other hand, when a faculty member got up—faculty members had the right to get up at any time, having interspersed themselves among the students, and at that time Joan Robinson stood up and attempted to argue with him—he simply cut their heads off. No matter how ingenious what they said was, he would make nonsense of it. And that, again, flattered the students, because they had been told that they were really incisive and then somebody they knew was really clever was being reduced to rubble before their very eyes. That was a doubly flattering thing. I think that this has something to do with the various well-known reactions to Keynes as a personality. When he was out of the public eye, he could be extremely kind and charming, and could make somebody feel glad to be alive. On the other hand, when the chips were really down, he could be quite ruthless in the way he dealt with people.

I HAPPENED TO MEET Robertson a day or two after this, and I expressed my tremendous appreciation both for the invitation and for the paper itself. He said to me, "Ah, but you missed something that used to be there—the impishness of his mind." And that, of course, reflected Robertson's very long concern and intimacy, first as a student and then as a junior colleague, with Keynes. He missed the flash of brilliance, or penetrating remarks of an unexpected kind. The paper was impressive, but it did not have the cut and thrust and the mental agility that Keynes had formerly displayed. And, of course, it was only about two or three weeks afterwards that Keynes died.

[1] Seymour Harris (whom I was to know but learn little from later at Harvard) got into the act very quickly with a denunciation of this; and that set off a whole wave of books on the permanent dollar shortage. The most unfortunate economist in that respect was Donald MacDougall, who managed to produce a very scholarly 400-odd page book, full of regression analyses of everything you could think of, demonstrating conclusively that there *was* a permanent dollar shortage. He had taken so long over the regressions that by the time the book came out there was clearly a dollar surplus, and the book had to be remaindered. And there has been a dollar glut virtually ever since, in more or less the same basic and mistaken sense.

Well, Keynes was right. In fact, we are suffering now in the American economy from an over-shooting of the mechanism he talked about, though the mechanism failed to grab hold for long enough for all those people to get their tenure and full professorships on the basis of "the permanent dollar shortage."

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THAT WAS MY FIRST YEAR at Cambridge, and then I went back to Toronto and then to Harvard. But in between I worked my way across the ocean on a cattle boat and returned to visit some Cambridge friends. I. G. Patel, I think it was, told me I should go to see Robertson. So I went to see him, expecting it to be a pretty lame encounter, a sort of visit of respect; and so it was, more or less. We did not have too much in common, but at the very end he stunned me by asking whether I would like an appointment in Cambridge. I recovered enough to say, "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes," and later, after I got to Harvard, I received a letter from him, written in his own hand. He never used a stenographer except for typing papers, conducting all of his correspondence himself; and this had been true even when he was the secretary (or chairman) of the faculty. Everything was done by hand, and it was infernally difficult to read.

I later discovered this was the done thing, and mail delivery happened to be very good. I became involved several times in controversies with Joan Robinson. She would send me a handwritten note in the morning, and I would scribble an answer by noonday; and then I would get a note back in the evening saying, "Where you made your mistake is as follows. . . ." I could keep that up for two days; but I soon wearied of the game. Why was I the only one who made hopeless mistakes in pure theory?

AT HARVARD, I was educated in Keynesian economics by Alvin Hansen and Seymour Harris. I cut a lot of ice around Harvard, since Cambridge was where they all would have liked to have gone. That eased my path as a graduate student considerably, and I duly re-crossed the Atlantic and went back to Cambridge.

By that time two other members of the cast had appeared on the scene, Richard Kahn and Nicholas Kaldor. That set up a situation for the next ten years or so, which became a situation of considerable strain. Without, I hope, going too far in personal terms, I think one has to understand what lay behind the bitterness of the controversies in terms of the personalities involved. When you become a member of the Cambridge faculty, you are there for life; there's nowhere else to go. And each of you is attached to a particular college, and you teach that college's students. You give your lectures (but that is a rather minor part of the responsibilities). Is there anything more likely to generate personal bitterness (and a penchant for overstepping the bounds of civilised discourse) than the knowledge that you and that other person are stuck there for the next thirty years? You cannot really do them any harm: they are not going to apply for a job anywhere else, so your opinion on their incompetence will never be solicited. And the same applies to you. You can be as incompetent as you want to be; you still have most of the weapons in your hands, in the sense that you can tell your students what you like and carry on the war that way.

The physical environment and the nature of the academic appointment had quite a bit to do with the bitter personal animosity of Cambridge controversy. There is something of the flavour of it in C. P. Snow's novels, which refer to a college that is really a composite of Cambridge colleges and their gossip. That kind of situation makes for considerable acrimony and for dissatisfaction in the long run among the students, because they are being told one thing by one teacher and another thing by another. Then the examinations are not set by the individual teacher, which would make life easy: you could be a Keynesian in one examination and a "Loanable Funds Man" in another. But you have somehow to straddle the issues in a paper which will possibly be marked by one of each, which means that the ability of one to influence the other is going to have a substantial influence on the outcome. There will also be an external examiner whose name you may not even know (since they make every effort to keep the external examiners secret until the last possible moment). He may well set you a question innocently, into which you can drag liquidity preference or loanable funds. All those traps lie in wait. In addition, most students at Cambridge were not planning to become professional economists; so spending a couple of years trying to master the ins-and-outs of liquidity preference *versus* loanable funds before going back to India as a government planner was not exactly a wise investment of their time. Nevertheless, that was the prevailing ethos.

ROBERTSON HAD BEEN a supervisee (or a "pupil" as they used to describe it) of Keynes, and there was a great personal attachment between them. It lasted through the '20s, but broke up with the publication of Keynes's *Treatise* (1930). The

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Treatise introduced a great many new concepts and a few equations that turned out to have nothing very much in them. On one of the final-year examinations (these are compulsory examinations, incidentally, there is no getting around it), Robertson set the question, "In the *Treatise* Mr Keynes says—. . . . Does this mean that the quantity theory, besides being a tautology, is not true?" And that kind of thing would go on in the exams in my day as student and don.

Robertson had been very deeply attached to Keynes; they broke over the *Treatise* basically, but it became worse as *The General Theory* began to emerge. And Keynes had a group of young people around him—Richard Kahn and Joan Robinson, in particular, though there were a number of others who were involved who didn't stay at Cambridge but went elsewhere. He deliberately egged them on to attack Robertson—not that they needed much urging.

Now to understand the implications of that one has to know a bit about the characters of the persons involved. Robertson was a very shy, gentle person. I suppose he might be best described as "an English gentleman." He had served in the First World War and been awarded the Military Cross, though nobody ever spoke about this, and I never found out for what act of valour he received it. It certainly was not anything he ever talked about. He was a bachelor and lived all the time in his college; and his attitude towards economics was pretty much of a gentleman's attitude and an Establishment attitude. He had been trained as a classicist and that, I suspect, was where his heart really lay. His attitude towards economics was that it was something one did lightly. And, of course, some people at least who have read his little book on *Money* (1922) will remember the quotations from *Alice in Wonderland* with which he started each chapter. This truly reflected his character: whimsical, somewhat withdrawn, and very shy, and it expressed itself in what I have already mentioned—his writing out every word of his lectures and entertaining no questions, the lectures being a theatrical performance, scripted by himself. He was not any good at give-and-take. The most you would get out of him at the Political Economy Club was a sentence or two of a not very informative nature. And Keynes had egged his young people on against him.

Their attraction to economics, particularly in the case of Joan Robinson, was basically a radical political attitude. This led to them being described by Joseph Schumpeter as "Marxo-Keynesians." In that respect one has to accord an important influence to Michael Kalecki, who had arrived in Cambridge and become one of the group in the middle '30s, and who had actually produced much of the General Theory in his own writings in Polish (which were eventually translated), though with a very strongly Marxist flavour. Where Keynes had an "aggregate propensity to consume," which is the key pin of his apparatus, Kalecki had the division of society into workers and capitalists. On the Marxist assumption that the capitalists save and invest most of their income and workers consume most of theirs, you can regard the capitalists abstractly as having a unitary marginal propensity to save, and the workers a zero one. In fact, some of the empirical work of that period was devoted to this problem. Much to people's surprise they found that workers *also* save, and that the difference in marginal propensities was not all that great (though it was certainly statistically significant).

Keynesian economics originally (at least on a majority interpretation of it) started out really as a way of saving capitalism from the stupidity of its managers, and this, I think, remains the majority tradition of monetary economics outside England. The general proposition—that policy-making does have to pay attention to macro-economic management (but once that is properly looked after, micro-economics comes into its own)—became, in the Cambridge concept, very much tied up with questions which go a long way back in the history of economics, particularly the question of the justification, if any, for the payment of interest. On that question the classical economists often showed their complete failure to distinguish science from emotion. That certainly survived in this tradition at Cambridge. It is one thing to say that people who own property "do not deserve to own it," that inheritance of property is "a bad thing socially," and so forth. It is another thing to say that property, therefore, must be *unproductive*—because we want to believe that the people who own it have no real social function.

THIS, OF COURSE, HAS BEEN one of the major problems in Soviet Russian economic planning. The Russians are exceedingly good at developing human capital. One of the major sources of their rapid growth has been the attention they have paid to developing the characteristics of the individual as a worker, or as administrator, or whatever else, fostering human talent as

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far as possible by intensive emphasis on education. Where their chief difficulties come are from attempting to argue that interest has no justification and no meaning, that capital is not scarce, that you should treat it as if it cost you nothing (and naturally if it *is* scarce you get into trouble). The same sort of problem arises in Russia with respect to the rent of land, which again (according to the Marxist and pre-Marxist tradition of various writers such as Ricardo) implies there is something wrong somewhere since no work is being done to generate the rent of land. Much of the development of economic theory, of course, concerns the separation of the economic logic of prices being attached to things that are scarce from the question of *morality*. Well, that confusion of logic still runs right through the Cambridge Keynesian school (and I will say a little more about that later).

MY POINT OF DEPARTURE is this characteristic of Robertson: a man who was very aloof about relationships with other people and was not cut out for the rough life of politicking behind the scenes or for public debate. This was fully realised by the other chief protagonist in the argument, Joan Robinson. She—I would not say necessarily consciously—certainly used the attitudes of the opposite sex towards her as an excuse for behaviour which often would not have been acceptable from a male economist, I mean in terms of distorting arguments and abusing the privileges of academic discourse. It was her favourite ploy with the students to say, "Well, I don't mind—I'll gladly have a public debate with Robertson on any issue at any time." Well, take—on the one hand—Joan Robinson, whose forte in life has been standing up in front of audiences and announcing her political conclusions (with much economic nonsense) without feeling any compunction about it; and—on the other hand—Robertson, who had to write out every lecture in order to give himself the confidence to deliver it. This was certainly no contest. it was a giant challenging a baby to a boxing match. And this went on continually.

The background to all this was the harrying of Robertson through the 1930s both in print and personally; the latter was much more serious. He had been prevented from receiving what he (and many others) considered was the final reward of a serious academic career, namely the professorship at Cambridge; for that reason he had gone to the London School of Economics as a professor. Fortunately for him, the War broke out—and the London School of Economics moved to Cambridge. So he could be a professor at the London School and still live in his old rooms. At the end of the War, when it was clear that Keynes was never going to come back to academic life, these people got together and persuaded Robertson to take the chair on the basis of promises by them that they would "stop the persecution," would "live and let live," and so forth. But those promises were very quickly forgotten. The bitter controversy and intellectual guerrilla warfare resumed full sway.

I remember taking Anthony Scott, a friend of mine from Harvard (who is now a professor at the University of British Columbia) to one of Joan Robinson's lectures. She was holding forth about liquidity preference and loanable funds. One of her main remarks was first of all to call attention to some analysis of Maurice Dobb's (about the Benefits of Planning) in terms of an analogy. A man is walking along a road across the field from his dog, and the dog tries to catch up with him. It starts off and each moment it is aiming for the man; but as it goes along the man is also going along, so it traces out a sort of curve: the "pursuit curve." Yet, if it had the brains, it would realise that if it did its canine calculations properly, it could go in a straight line to the point where the man had now arrived and save itself a lot of legwork. Joan Robinson called attention to this analogy, and then she said, ". . . and loanable funds is the fly buzzing around the nose of the dog." This may be good polemical tactics, but not exactly very instructive to somebody who wants to know what the real economic issues are. A great deal of this sort of thing went into her lectures, and much of the controversy was concerned with debating issues which had been raised in the 1930s. Here I want to fill in some background history which, I think, would help to clarify the basic questions.

THE QUANTITY THEORY as we think of it now, thanks to the atavism perpetrated by my colleague in Chicago, Milton Friedman, is usually conceived of as $MV=PT$, or $M=kOP$, or whatever. The Cambridge formulation which we used to have a lot of fun with as students was $M=kOP$. We always referred to it as *M equals kOP*, where M is the nominal quantity of money, k is a functional relationship representing the

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ratio of money people want to hold to their money income, O is output, and P is the price level. If we go back to Knut Wicksell we notice that for Wicksell this was merely the starting point: interpreting what this equation meant and how it operated. But very quickly Wicksell, in his own work (and in the development of the theory, based on his work) got quite a way off from the equation of exchange, which was just a starting point, to a discussion of the conditions under which money will be neutral—that is, under which monetary developments will not interfere with the achievement of the real barter equilibrium of the economy. Now Wicksell stated the conditions for that in terms of three principles which he thought were equivalent: namely, that savings should equal investment; or that the money rate of interest and the real rate of interest should be equal; or that prices should be stable.

A young Swedish economist, Johan Åkerman, pointed out that in a growing economy these conditions are not the same—that, in a growing economy, keeping savings and investment equal (at least as these are commonly defined) would not necessarily mean stability of the price level, and in particular as output increases with a given quantity of money the price level will tend to fall. As this becomes expected, then the money rate of interest will lie below the real rate—because people who hold money will be getting the automatic benefit of an increase of the purchasing power of money.

That set the framework for the development of the general quantity theory tradition, particularly with the Austrian economists who came to be represented in England by Friedrich Hayek of the London School of Economics. It also characterises Keynes's work up to and including the *Treatise*. The basic mechanism which determines whether the economy is going through a "boom" or a "recession" is whether Savings are *less than* or *greater than* Investment. But savings there are defined as voluntary savings out of a full employment level of income, and investment is defined as the investment that businessmen want to make. So that if you have an excess of investment over voluntary saving you will get a rise in incomes and increases in saving which will accrue to businessmen as windfall profits. Now, in *ex post* accounting terms you would count these as part of "savings", as in *The General Theory*. But in the *Treatise* these are windfall profits and not part of savings as defined by Keynes. Similarly the other way around. If full-employment Savings tends to exceed full-employment Investment, then you get a fall in the price level with windfall losses for entrepreneurs. Again, the mechanism is inequality of Savings and Investment (in the special sense defined).

ROBERTSON'S MAJOR CONTRIBUTION to the development of monetary theory was concerned with this question of the conditions for monetary equilibrium, in which he introduced two kinds of factors. There was the balance of real savings and investment, but then there was also the balance between the desire to accumulate cash balances and the willingness of the monetary authority to create them. So you had a market for loanable funds in which (in the short run) equilibrium would require that the sum of savings and new money creation would be equal to investment plus hoarding, the desire to accumulate cash balances.

It is a feature of Robertson's writings in this field—and one which comes as somewhat of a surprise to someone who has read Keynes's frequent diatribes against central bankers—that he was very much in touch with policy-making. He was, in fact, the only economist in the country who could invite himself to lunch at the Bank of England. While the Bank of England is not quite as august or eminent as it used to be, still, there were many others who had to wait to be asked. In my own case it was only two years ago that they asked me, and then it was not the Governor, it was just one of the Court. (The lunch, incidentally, was rather austere, though the wines were good.) Robertson kept writing into his monetary theory an assumption which to our minds would seem very strange (particularly given the 20 years or so of criticism of the U.S. Federal Reserve System that there has been), namely that "the monetary authority is pretty smart." Robertson always assumed that the monetary authority was "smart" enough to know whether a disturbance in the market is due to a change in the real factors, Savings and Investment, or due to a change in "the hoarding factor", namely the desire of people to hold idle balances. So from place to place you find him remarking that a normally astute central bank will recognise this difference; and if people want more money because there is a scramble for liquidity, the central bank will provide it. That, of course, is good, standard, central banking theory. It even goes back to Walter Bagehot. But it makes a big difference to the model whether

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you assume that the authorities are "smart" and intelligent or not. The consensus among American monetary economists is, on the whole, that they are *not*, and that their efforts to be "smart" cause more trouble than they are worth. Not just Milton Friedman, but a number of others (including the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress) have come out in favour of limiting the power of the central bank to introduce arbitrary disturbances in the market by subjecting it to some sort of rule (or band limits) on what it can do to the money supply.

Robertson's contribution, then, was to set the problem up *this* way with loanable funds and to take account of hoarding. But it was very easy to make fun of the concept of hoarding. When I was a student at Harvard, for example, it was not Robertson but Hayek that people were having great difficulty with—because he had the concept of "forced saving." This is a concept, which after 40 more years of monetary theorising, we can understand pretty well. All it amounts to is that, if you inflate the money supply of an economy, this will drive up prices; and the rise in prices will cause people to try to restore their real balances; and, to do that, they have to spend less on goods and services. So, you are extracting goods and services from them through the inflationary process. This is known in the modern literature as "the inflation tax."

But it is very easy to poke fun at the idea of hoarding and forced saving—who has the money? who has the savings?—and all that kind of thing. This was what Cambridge in the early 1950s was spending most of its time on. Richard Kahn was giving his lectures on monetary theory; in fact, there were several series of lectures going on this particular kind of issue. That, frankly, is why I chose to specialise in money and banking institutions—and to leave monetary theory alone—while I was teaching there.

IT WAS PRIMARILY KAHN who carried on the Keynesian tradition of liquidity preference theory. It is important for the understanding of Keynes to realise that he started his life as a lecturer—talking about the stock market and the financial markets generally—and that he kept on with those lectures through much of his career. Kahn took over from him both in lecturing on that subject and in managing the College's finances (where this analysis is really of great practical importance). Kahn was a rather peculiar lecturer. He would always spend something like twenty minutes of an hour summarising what he had said the *last* time and then, by the time he got through that, of course he could not finish what he was going to do *this* time, so that had to go into the *next* lecture's summary. And so you went on from week to week, being told either what he said last week or what he was going to say next time, with a very thin sliver in between of what he was actually saying this time.

But Kahn's main function in Cambridge economics was not the contribution of his own subtle analysis of liquidity preference. It was (on the one hand) to direct the strategy and tactics of left-wing academic political manoeuvres in the Faculty, and (on the other hand) to marshal all the intellects in support of Joan Robinson's version of Keynesianism. For this purpose, he played the affable host to the self-styled "secret seminar", which met in his King's College rooms virtually every Tuesday evening in the Michaelmas and Easter terms and increasingly became a forum for the advance testing of the technical analysis of Joan Robinson's *The Accumulation of Capital*.[2]

Anyway, Kahn was lecturing on liquidity preference theory, and Joan Robinson was lecturing on aggregate demand theory. She, of course, lacked the rewarding subtlety of Kahn's mind. Kahn was juggling, long before anyone else, with the question of extending liquidity preference theory to allow for more than two assets—treasury bills and equities as well as Keynes's money and bonds—and grappling with complicated issues of portfolio management theory.

Robertson, meanwhile, was giving essentially what was by then very old-fashioned stuff. He began with $M=kOP$, went on to loanable funds, and wound up with "the four crucial fractions" (which Paul Samuelson sneeringly dismissed in his *Quarterly Journal of Economics* obituary of Robertson).

Actually, the four crucial fractions, which I do not want to go into here, had a lot more sense to them than Samuelson allowed. Let me explain very briefly what the problem is. One has a

[2] The description "secret seminar", incidentally, was a violent misnomer: its existence was known to all, and non-invitation to attend was deliberately used to snub those who lacked the correct Keynesian qualifications and/or political orientation, even though their theoretical abilities were indisputably at least equal to the group's average. "Included out" in this way were both the Cambridge economist P. T. Bauer and the American visitor Milton Friedman.

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banking system in a growing economy; and one has a certain rate of growth of the demand for money. The supply of money has to be provided by the banking system. The banking system has a desired relationship between the amount of commercial lending it wants to do and the amount of reserves it holds. The business community has desired ratios between financing by bank credit, financing by security issues, and financing by ploughed-back profits. Robertson's problem, which originated in the circumstances of the 1930s when bank lending dropped very sharply and banks came to be loaded up with government securities, was this: Is there anything in the natural course of evolution of a society that will make all these ratios work out correctly? Or will there be troubles because the money people demand does not match the money that they want to see supplied, as reflected in their borrowing from banks?

That formulation, again, was easy for a more mathematically trained generation to ridicule. Professor Samuelson, I think, behaved rather badly in using an obituary of Robertson to make fun of it and of other efforts by a subtle but hopelessly literary mind to tackle serious problems. If Samuelson had drawn the analogy with Don Patinkin's *Money, Interest and Prices*, which was by then available, he might have been more perceptive. And if we had studied Robertson more carefully ourselves, we undoubtedly would have understood Patinkin much better. Anyway, Robertson was lecturing away on pre-Keynesian quantity-theory lines, $M=kOP$ and loanable funds and the four crucial fractions; and Joan Robinson was slashing away at Robertson using a very simple version of liquidity preference theory; and Kahn was making liquidity preference theory a general—and difficult—exercise in the theory of portfolio management.

As I HAVE SAID, the early part of that period was devoted to making fun of Robertson, who more and more did his writing in the form of interpretative essays, full of allusions and quotations. Richard Kahn once said that he wanted to stage a debate between Dennis Robertson and Thomas Balogh. The contest would impose only one condition: neither of them was to be allowed to quote or cite anyone else—they had to make a straightforward argument. That might have been a good competition, except that neither would have made it past the starting point without being disqualified. The Keynesians all amused themselves by asking what "hoarding" meant, and travestying Robertson's "period analysis" to show that, in the short run, the loanable-funds approach led to the conclusion that the rate of interest might go either up or down. This is a result easily achievable. One repeals Walras's Law (the law that all money must be either spent or held) or one incorporates a concealed change in liquidity preference along with a change in the real factors (saving and investment). Joan Robinson's famous 1951 *Econometrica* article on the rate of interest had played this game. But eventually they got tired of that, which was not very enlightening for the rest of us anyway. Then along came Roy Harrod with his dynamic growth equation; and Joan Robinson latched on to that and proceeded to create a new confusion which Cambridge has insisted on ever since in the realm of capital theory. It is the mistaken belief that to prove capitalism to be logically impossible is sufficient to dispose of its existence.

TO UNDERSTAND THAT CONTROVERSY, one has to understand something about the politics of academic debate in England; more particularly, to appreciate the sharp division between the London School and Cambridge over Hayek *versus* Keynes in the 1930s, which eventually led the younger people to start publishing *The Review of Economic Studies*, so that those interested in serious technical economics (rather than academic polemics) could publish their ideas.

Joan Robinson's work in this connection is essentially a criticism of the aggregate production function. (This relates total output produced by the economy to the total labour and capital it employs, *via* the technology which permits productive factors to be converted into products). It was developed by J. R. Hicks and R. G. D. Allen at the London School of Economics at the turn of the 1930s, and so implicitly carries on the Cambridge 1930s myth of a "revolutionary Cambridge" battling a dinosauric London orthodoxy. But by the 1950s F. A. Hayek had departed from London for Chicago, and there was no one left in London either capable of or interested in debating "capital theory" with Cambridge. Had it not been for Cambridge (U.S.A.)—I mean MIT not Harvard—responding eagerly to Joan Robinson's challenge to "orthodox" production function theory in order to display its mathematical-economics muscle—Cambridge (England) would have been revealed —even to its own captive student audience—as a

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voice crying nonsense in an imaginary wilderness. It would long since have been a dead duck professionally.[3]

A MAJOR BREAK-THROUGH in economics in the 1930s, as it appeared at the time, was the imperfect competition revolution. In the post-War period this was reconstituted in the proposition that prices do not reflect any rational profit-maximising process, but instead are determined by the mark-up that entrepreneurs choose for their own unexplained reasons to add on to their prime costs. As a consequence, running through the works of Joan Robinson (and quite a few American Keynesians of the same 1930s vintage like Sidney Weintraub and others) you find the notion that we really have no theory of income distribution and price determination that has any rational basis. One, therefore, has to construct one out of whatever pseudo-sociological materials lie to hand. This position, among other things, provides the scientific vacuum from which recommendations for Incomes Policy as a cure for inflation are derived.

The two major Cambridge protagonists in the attack on the aggregate production function were Joan Robinson and Nicholas Kaldor. While they agreed on the utter imbecility of neo-classical production and distribution theory, they differ radically on what should be put in its place. Joan Robinson has put vast efforts of both analysis and personal assertiveness into developing the theory of capital to the point where she has proved conclusively to her own satisfaction that Capitalism Cannot Possibly Work.

Nicholas Kaldor once commented that if you really believe in capitalism, it is worth while doing all the work required to explain how it functions. If you do not believe in capitalism, it is not worth while exploring how it is supposed to work in order to show why it doesn't. But to do all that work in order to show that it cannot work is a waste of time.

Well, Cambridge is a very isolated place, and the message still has not reached there that, by and large, the world has enjoyed full employment and fairly successful capitalism for over a quarter of the post-War century and that, that being so, the fact that Britain had mass unemployment for 20 years and the rest of the world for about eight years of the inter-War period is not really a very great violation of the long run of historical experience. Joan Robinson's effort (and that of many of her disciples) had been to prove that capitalism cannot work and to do this on purely intellectual grounds. This is not a scientific game at all; it is not even an interesting divertissement; but with enough prestige inherited from superior minds, and with enough vociferousness, you can make a lot of the profession think that it must be important. One of the major elements in the radical case is the ancient idea that the rate of interest really has nothing to determine it. It is modernised into the contention that what determines the rate of profit is whatever it is that makes entrepreneurs decide on various kinds of mark-ups (or else some extension of the concept of "liquidity preference").

NICHOLAS KALDOR, on the other hand, being a man who rolls with the times fairly fast, decided early on that capitalism actually was working. So for him the problem was, given that it works, it cannot possibly work because the theory of it is right. It must work for some quite unsuspected reason which only people as intelligent as himself can see. He developed a great deal of new theory to that effect, opposing Joan Robinson on theoretical fundamentals but joining her in rejecting the production function. In particular he developed a new "Keynesian" theory of income distribution to oppose to marginal productivity theory, and something called the "technical progress function" to reconcile production theory with his new distribution theory, thereby scoring twice over orthodox theory while not violating the crude facts of empirical observation. So that, you will see, is having it both ways. I was wrong the first time in saying it did not work. Now I *must* be doubly right, because I *can* show you that it cannot possibly work for the reasons that people always said it works; but that it nevertheless works, after all, according to a new theory I have developed to replace the theory I claim cannot possibly work. The consistency of the results—i.e. with the obvious facts the others started with—irrefutably demonstrates the brilliance of my own contribution.

[3] Cambridge (U.S.A.), out of a misplaced sense of rivalry, an underestimation of its own intellectual capacity, and an abnegation of its own common sense, chose to engage with Cambridge (England) in debate about these allegedly fundamental issues in theory, and so kept Cambridge (England) in the zombie business. It is a sucker's game for Cambridge (U.S.A.). Nonsense is nonsense, no matter how prestigiously pronounced; so why take it seriously and reconstruct it to the point where you make mistakes yourself?

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I WANT to return briefly to the "production function" as the subject of the Cambridge debate. One of the leading figures at London was J. R. Hicks, who won the Nobel Prize in 1972. He was instrumental in developing "general equilibrium theory" in the United Kingdom. As a preliminary, in his *Theory of Wages* he applied the aggregate production function to the determination of the distribution of income. I want to say two things about that.

1. If you use a single aggregative model, which produces only one "product", of course demand has nothing to do with the distribution of income —it is purely technologically determined by the production function. The total amounts of labour and capital suffice to determine how much each contributes to total output, and hence receives under competitive market conditions. So naturally, anyone who does not like the distribution of income (and is not smart enough to realise that there is a difference between the economic functions of factors of production and the social function of the distribution of their ownership) has a natural incentive to attack the production concept as a way of laying an intellectual foundation—though a completely unnecessary one—for his beliefs about the just distribution of property and income.

2. If you go beyond the one-sector model to a two-sector model, demand does come in again. The distribution of income is not determined by technology and factor supplies alone, as the one-sector model necessitates. In a two-sector model there are two goods—which may for present purposes be identified with Consumer Goods and Capital Equipment—and two industries producing them, these industries using labour and capital in different proportions. A shift of production towards the labour-intensive industry increases the demand for labour, raises its price, and lowers the value of the services of capital (and vice versa). Hence, to determine the prices of factor services to production and the distribution of income, we need to bring in the demands of the two groups of factor owners for the two goods, weighted by the distribution of income corresponding to the allocation of production between the two industries.

The Cambridge mind however never stretched to the two-sector model, until they began working on the line of proving that capitalism could not work. They then developed the production side of the two-sector model, but they never fed back the implications of that for demand through the distribution of income between labour and capital and the preference systems of these two factors of production for the consumption of goods. Instead they relied on the Keynesian assertion that investment is subject to no budgetary constraint. Investors can undertake any amount of investment they want; saving is a fixed proportion of income (the proportion differing between labour and capital owners). Then you arrive at a model which is "overdetermined" in the sense that you have investors determining how much investment there is and, therefore, how much has to be saved. This, in turn, implies a distribution of income which sees to it that amount does get saved. On the other hand, you have a production side of the economy which implies typically a different rate of return on capital and wage rate than is consistent with the assertion that investment is not subject to a budget constraint.

My own view is that the Keynesian assertion is the one that has to go—because it is inconsistent with the observable facts. It implies that investment has nothing to do with the rate of interest, that entrepreneurs can always find all the money they want for investment, and that everything depends on their high animal spirits.

IT WAS ABOUT THAT TIME—the 1950s—that I began to appreciate the difference between scientific and ideological motivations for theoretical work. I began to realise that more and more Cambridge people in my judgment were perverting economics in order to defend intellectual and emotional positions taken in the 1930s. In particular, for them Keynesian economics was not a theoretical advance to be built on for scientific progress and improved social policy. It was only a tool for furthering left-wing politics at the level of intellectual debate.

So I decided to leave Cambridge and go somewhere else where I might learn something useful—namely to Manchester.

I eventually left Manchester to go to Chicago, in spite of the fact that my days in Manchester were probably the happiest in my life, professionally speaking. Over the years I became fed up with the intellectual poverty of English economics, which provided increasingly inadequate spiritual compensation for the material poverty that English academic life in the provinces imposed.

But that is another story.

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FILM

The American as Movie Critic

Sarris, Simon, Kael & Macdonald — By ISABEL QUIGLY

WE FORGET HOW LONG the cinema took in coming (like printing in the general march of civilisation: how odd that the Romans, with their practical genius, never hit upon something so obvious). We forget that all film theory has grown up within living memory, that every aesthetic fashion, notion, change, development and the rest of it was conceived and born, lived and died and was superseded by others, all within half a century or a bit more. In the span of civilisation the film's life-cycle is like a may-fly's. Of course there were geniuses on the way, anachronistic souls who were out of period forwards rather than backwards and seem to have seen what the film might be capable of long before anyone else did, before many took it seriously at all; Griffith, Eisenstein, say. But on the whole, before the advent of pop awareness, it was thought irredeemably pop. In my teens I was ashamed of being a film fan and thought it a secret vice, like eating sweets in private. Indeed it always seemed like intellectual or spiritual guzzling—delicious but likely to cause awful decay in the long run; that anyone might consider it improving or uplifting or remotely worth doing never occurred to me. Bookish and smug this may have been, but it was a fairly widespread attitude.

In other words, people have been thinking, writing, theorising over painting and books, buildings and music, sculpture and poetry, for hundreds of years but over the film for less than seventy. On all the other arts the theory has grown organically, as it were, matching the march of history, the climate of opinion, the philosophical background of the times. Slowly ideas have emerged, language has acquired its shorthand of understanding, techniques have been understood in the context of their age, of the artist's experience. But in the film, where action can be slowed or speeded to alter our understanding of it, the whole process of producing a theory has gone at breakneck speed, with what sometimes looks like the flickering, hysterical quality of the early car chases. It isn't just that a fifty-year-old film is an antique, to be treated with reverence for its fragility and irreplaceability, for its hilarious yet impressive "otherness" and air of ancient history. It isn't even that a twenty-year-old film ages much faster than its audience and so looks much more than a generation old. It is that ideas grow up, live and die; theorists follow one another at too fast a pace to keep up with. What was modern yesterday is so quickly ancient that even a hold-up in distribution can sour its quality.

This isn't just to say that at the most superficial level the film is trendy and therefore dates; that of all the senses perhaps sight is most easily wooed and won by fashion. It is to say that theory is vigorous, constantly renewed and rehatched, outworn and scrapped; that practice has to run to keep up with it and often doesn't, which makes things look jaded, we don't always quite see why. Theorists, of course, are tunnellers, mole-like disturbers of the earth on which the practitioners are building. Theorists of the film live more literally than most in darkness.

THEORISTS OF THE FILM sounds grandiose, and the most important theorists are probably those who can put their theories into practice—the directors with ideas. Most people who write about the cinema are nothing of the sort, at least in their published work. They haven't space to be: not enough time, not enough elbow room or column inches. The film critic is one thing, the film reviewer another. And at the lowest level of all, at least in the view of the film critic/reviewer, is the mere *film writer*, that ghostly nobody who yet may have lots of prestige in the commercial set-up, be wined and flattered quite as much as his more intellectual colleagues; he doesn't write about films, let alone about his theory of the cinema, but about its surrounding floss and fluff. In the old days he was kept busy with the

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fan magazines, the stories, purest invention, about the stars and their doings; today he tends to be more sophisticated, interviewing Fellini, going to Cannes.

A film critic relates what he sees week by week or festival by festival to a critical theory of his own. A film reviewer merely deals with the films as they come, individually, critically in the sense that he exercises judgment but without putting what he sees into a wider critical context. Most film reviewers would like to be (and indeed call themselves) film critics but are squashed into too small a column, haven't room for more than a quick mention of director, stars and story and an even quicker appraisal of the result. Or they work for a paper that wants a reviewer not a critic and quickly get the sack.

Of course the two overlap. The theorist isn't all theory and the reviewer has ideas beyond his nose and the screen. Without specific examples the theorist would be unreadable and without a critical framework of some sort the reviewer would be thrashing about, incapable of judgment.

But there is another division between the two, a dividing line between those to whom the film is central and those to whom it is marginal. A critic tends to be besotted with the cinema, to spend most of his waking hours watching films and much of his sleep (one suspects) dreaming of them. He watches the bad and the dull and the indifferent as well as the good and the marvellous, as a literary man tends, if there is nothing else to read, to find plenty of interest in (say) the *A-Z* London street-guide. He thinks nothing of seeing a favourite film ten or even twenty times, as a literary man thinks nothing of knowing books in minute and (to others) incredible, boring detail, or long poems by heart. Often, though he may look like anyone else, he is a man obsessed to the point of lacking an ordinary domestic life; a human mole, communicating with other moles but not much with ordinary humans.

Film buffs, I found in my days among them, are often unmarried, childless, homeless in the sense of uncluttered by domestic cares and doings. Ready to rush whenever necessary to the ends of the earth for this or that festival, they can hardly afford to lumber themselves with everyday ties and affections, with dogs and gardens and demanding lovers. Their lives are strung between luxury on the one hand, the slick high-life that film money dispenses to those whose interest it wants to cultivate, and a private existence that seems thin and often spartan, one of suitcases and taxis, bars, rush, deadlines, drudgery. The film reviewer, unwilling to commit himself to this outlandish existence, may be knowledgeable but is not besotted; and a besotted interest (indeed, a lack of others) is needed nowadays if you are to keep even mildly up with what is happening in the film world.

FOR A FILM CRITIC HAS TO KNOW (and even a film reviewer is expected to know, though he often doesn't) something, at least, about the *whole world's* film output, past and present. We don't expect a literary critic to have a close knowledge of the writings of Poland and Japan, Peru and Iceland and the Congo. But the film critic is expected (even expects himself) to keep up with all these places and plenty more, as well as all trends, all styles, all levels. Of course there is specialisation too and a parcelling out of areas of interest, historical periods, *genres* and the rest of it. But even the world's greatest expert on early Chaplinology or middle Lubitsch has generally dabbled more than a toe in an impressive number of other places. What fun to see a couple of films a week and be paid instead of paying for it, think his readers when they read his column reviewing a couple of films; not knowing the iceberg underside of hours, days, weeks, months, a life-time of screen-lit darkness. When five hundred films seen in a year are mentioned, you can break it down to one-and-a-half a day including Sundays, Christmas, birthdays and every other day; sunny days on which other people go for picnics, holidays on which other people lounge about. At film festivals (and you can spend almost the whole year at festivals, somewhere or other between Venice and Mar del Plata, Cracow and Acapulco) you can see films almost round the clock, except perhaps for a few hours just before breakfast; and spend the missing bits of the twenty-four at film parties. This isn't work in the ordinary sense of the word or even eccentric enthusiasm. It is full-time fanaticism.

SOMETHING OF IT is reflected in the books on film subjects that now pour out, books from every angle and at every level, about every period and aspect and attitude and of every degree of seriousness and silliness; from fan-club gush to the screenplays of Carl Dreyer (and the fan-club gush becomes sociology in no time), from Ph.D. theses to the office memos of David O. Selznick.

Time was when a general history like Roger Manvell's Pelican *Film* got dog-eared and underlined, having to satisfy a great hunger for information and ideas. Today, you could fill a house with film books and soon cram attic and basement and have them tumbling out of the windows. Among them, particularly in America (but no doubt we shall soon catch up), are

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collections of past critical writings, the work of this or that film critic/reviewer in this or that newspaper, magazine, or quarterly across the past few years. These pressed and concentrated remains of their authors' wit and wisdom must (one feels) cause all kinds of splits and contradictions in those authors' minds: pleasure in producing a book with so little effort, out of ephemeral oddments from the past; shame at being faced with the ephemeral oddments, written at speed for a quick deadline, now almost inevitably dated yet decked out in a form that suggests permanence and stateliness, that makes them seem definitive and dogmatic.

YET FROM THE READER'S POINT OF VIEW there is a lot to be said for them. At their heftiest they are well worth shelf-room as sober works of reference, and at their lightest they make good bedside reading. By the time they reach the reader he is likely to have seen the films they discuss, which he isn't likely to have done when he reads the same critic's column in the first place. This makes things a good deal livelier because it means he can agree or disagree and in general pick up the points made and argue retrospectively with him. Even non-fanatics of the film may find such books good value because if the mind is worth meeting, the critical framework of both of them interesting enough (if not, of course, not), then the films themselves, *pace* the fanatics, needn't matter so much. Indeed the more general his principles, the more extended his mind, the less the critic depends on the particular film he is dealing with for his interest or effect. I am not suggesting that he should fly off into abstraction or fail to deal in detail with the film he is looking at—only that he may do just as much with a trifle as with a masterpiece, that the quality of his subject doesn't shape the quality of his mind.

Finally, since the books contain a selection, they presumably leave out the duller and more ephemeral parts of each critic's work. In the case of an individual this may have disadvantages, making him just that shade too bright and crisp. But in the case of an anthology from a single journal rather than a single critic it has obvious advantages: apart from paring down the duller contributions, it can give a direction and a pattern to the journal's policy and outlook, can make it speak as the voice (if that's what it tries to be) of a particular group and attitude.

TAKE *Film Culture*[1] (from the magazine of that name), which claims to show "the New American Cinema through the pages of its foremost film journal; with 79 illustrations." Here it all is, from the mid-1950s to the end of the '60s, the theory and practice of the American "alternative" cinema, from which ideas and practices have (of course) leaked through to the commercial cinema and parts of which (Warhol's films, for instance) have already had immense commercial success. "Magazines have been the bulwarks of polemical aesthetics in our time," says its editor. His choice of extracts goes to show what he calls the "dualities and bifurcations" of its outlook; its emotional and financial independence of, yet its subconscious cultural links with, the Hollywood cinema; its search for new forms, methods, experiences, ways of life, techniques, all seen as part of the main cultural life of this century, the ideas of modern philosophy, the expressions of modern painting, design and graphics, the movements in science. Hollywood and the dream factory seem a very long way from the worlds of Kenneth Anger, Jack Smith or Stan Brakhage, but a critic like Andrew Sarris can step genially between the two ("film criticism can seem as schizophrenic as film production," the editor mutters darkly), partly because he was sustained by a shiny, glittery, blackish humour.

> "I took the satirical view that we were not poor because we were pure, but pure because we were poor, and our integrity was directly proportional to our obscurity [Sarris writes in his own book, *Confessions of a Cultist*[2]]. Still, I suppose we represented a new breed of film critic. The cultural rationale of our worthier predecessors . . . was that they were too good to be reviewing movies. We, on the contrary, were not considered much good for anything else. Like one-eyed lemmings, we plunged headlong into the murky depths of specialisation."

Oddest of all is the founder of *Film Culture*, Jonas Mekas, who seems to have started with a foot in one camp and then leapt into its opposite one. In an early essay on "The Experimental Film in America" he turns a harsh eye on to what he calls its "escapism, unresolved frustrations, sadism and cruelty, fatalism and juvenile pessimism", and even has a section labelled "The Conspiracy of Homosexuality." In a footnote to the article he calls it "this Saint-Augustine-before-the-conversion piece" (which doesn't seem quite the right image: surely St Augustine's anti-sin campaign came after rather than before his conversion?) and concludes, either wryly or sadly, it isn't clear which, that "the tone, the thinking and the argumentation . . . are still used today by all the liberal and conservative critics to put down the avant-garde film-maker." (Liberal *and* conservative? It is worth being

[1] *Film Culture*. An anthology edited with an introduction by P. ADAMS SITNEY. Secker & Warburg, £3.50.

[2] *Confessions of a Cultist*. By ANDREW SARRIS. Simon & Schuster, $8.95.

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reminded now and then that although English is spoken, another country is speaking it.)

AS IN ALL THE ARTS it is these little magazines (and everyone seems agreed on at least the economic littleness of *Film Culture* in its early days) that set the pace, being unafraid to stick their necks out, talk too loudly, inflate small movements, give space to the lunatic fringe, exaggerate trends, and generally behave as designers of clothes do when they give their models shoulders like all-in wrestlers or shave their heads bald, hoping that as a result within the next year or so the average coat will be slightly squarer in the shoulders or the average hat or hair-style slightly less flouncy. This is their function: to do what can't be done on a bigger scale, to be indiscreet and immoderate, to say what it might embarrass them to say or us to hear in staider places, to take advantage of the fact that they are non-commercial and subterranean to go so far beyond middling opinion that they actually shift it a little, tug it in some direction or at least point out to it that other directions exist.

In the case of the cinema this matters particularly because of the film's popularity in both senses; because, as Dwight Macdonald puts it, "our movies are not generally considered 'art' at all." Admittedly he said that in 1929, but it still holds good for a lot of people; and when he talks of "that innocent missionary enthusiasm in which we early cineasts lived and had our critical being—so little yet written! so many yet to be converted!" it still seems to apply, however much the missionary field may have widened. Film addicts are still passionately partisan. The missionary (wide though his field is) is now more specialised, a preacher of cults or sects rather than religion in general. He may preach concrete cinema or direct cinema, the structural film or the pop film. But whatever the set-up of film-making, there is always the chain of action and reaction, reformation and counter-reformation. Then the magazines like *Film Culture* put out a manifesto and all seems new—until next time.

> "The history of cinema [as Annette Michelson puts it in *Film Culture*] like that of Revolution in our time, is a chronicle of hopes and expectations, aroused and suspended, tested and deceived."

So there are rousing calls to action, and up go the barricades. Jonas Mekas in 1959:

> "It is time to bring our films up to date. Hollywood films (and we mean Hollywood all over the world) reach us beautiful and dead. They are made with money, cameras and splicers, instead of with an enthusiasm, passion and imagination . . . there is no other way of breaking the frozen cinematic ground than through a *complete* derangement of the official cinematic senses."

Two years later, the New American Cinema Group:

> "The official cinema all over the world is running out of breath. It is morally corrupt, aesthetically obsolete, thematically superficial, temperamentally boring. . . . We don't want false, polished, slick films—we prefer them rough, unpolished, but alive; we don't want rosy films—we want them the colour of blood."

Two more years later, Robert Kelly:

> "The tragedy of the contemporary film is the utter and frightened distrust film-makers have for the *visual means*, the *prima materia* of their own art."

Off with his head! No parleying, no excuses, no surrender!

But there is plenty of detail, the microscopic school of criticism, and room for the freakish, the roundabout; for immensely long interviews with voluble people like Brakhage, careful examinations of Carl Dreyer or Eric von Stroheim, and pieces on laughter (solo or communal) or Jayne Mansfield (a five-page love-poem). Peter Kubelka remarks in an interview that you can't speak about a film till you've seen it at least twelve times (which puts paid to most film critics) and that sets the right tone of fervent impossibility. A lifetime is, then, too short to see more than a very little, obsessively, almost liturgically repeated. If you leave out the routine stuff, of course there's space and to spare for the frills. But is that really what they are? *Film Culture* and the avant-garde it expresses (like every movement in every art form) would claim that *they* are at the centre of film-making. In any case, where are the firm divisions? The avant-garde acts as a sort of invisible compost till it is absorbed by the rest and ceases to be remarkable, or at least remarked upon.

SARRIS, who keeps cool wherever he finds himself, is full of insights, signs of a keen intelligence and a well-stocked mind, those critical necessities; and of things you have to shake yourself not to believe without question on sight, so stylishly does he put them. No wonder they just put sentences of his all over the back of the jacket of *Confessions of a Cultist*, since any one of them should make the most incurious want to look inside. He hasn't just a graceful and effective way of putting things but a real ability to reflect the inner world of his mind and feelings, to show in his style the kind of man he is. All this, in spite of an almost mortal fault: the habit of slipping a kind of half-pun, half-paradox into the text wherever there is half or even a quarter chance of it.

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This smart alec technique is so far out of place in an otherwise elegant style that it is like having a smooth stretch of velvet suddenly spattered with, say, marmalade or tintacks. Screechingly infelicitous things are suddenly introduced such as "the audience begins peering around the edges, and this is just as well, because Preminger has no peer this year around the edges"; or "Belmondo, in real life as in reel life"; or "organisms talk away their orgasms"; or "Warhol is not bosh, but neither is he Bosch"; or "*La Chinoise* is more than Godard's valentine to youth; it is also his valedictory."

But against this occasional insobriety (which is surely what it must be) one must set, far more often, all kinds of epigrammatically expressed truths, exact and attractive. "Much of Antonioni's meaningful manner is derived from staring at a rock so long that mere opacity comes to equal profundity." Or: "*Before the Revolution* is the kind of film a director can make only once in his life, and I rejoice that Bertolucci made it before he became mature enough to learn that he couldn't." Or: "nowadays, when irrationality and hysteria have become institutionalised into life styles." Or: "the cross, the stake, the concentration camp will never rise on hallowed ground, but always on new terrain." Or there are briefer but perfectly effective little swats like: "realistic detail is the last refuge of the unimaginative director" or (the most quotable, surely, in argument) "consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

Sarris turns up again, writing a foreword to a book of Otis Ferguson's film reviews[3] from the *New Republic*, which he admires. Ferguson was killed in the last World War, so his last pieces come from early in 1942, more than a lifetime away from us in film terms. They start eight years earlier, so cover the Hollywood output from *It Happened One Night* and *Catherine the Great* at one end to *The Man Who Came to Dinner* and *Sullivan's Travels* at the other; with a few foreign films thrown in, including some rather shaming British things like *Quiet Wedding*, but little of the internationalism that now makes film people, more than most, global villagers. Ferguson was literate, humane, blessedly unsmart and, by modern standards, not particularly learned in film lore. But he was very serious about what he found, perceptive about what he saw, and at this distance still pretty readable whether or not you have seen the films he writes about.

THEN COMES THAT electric eel of criticism, Pauline Kael, who exemplifies a good deal of what one has thought about the complete, committed believer yet avoids being typed as this or that sort of film critic, with this or that predictable opinion. Her third book[4] of collected reviews takes them all from the *New Yorker*, except for a long essay from *Harper's*, and clearly she was given enough space to develop points, push arguments, see both wood and trees. Her commitment to what she calls "the sullen art of displaced persons" is total because (as I said earlier of the addict) it includes the bad and the shady, the dull, the ordinary. It includes what she repeatedly calls trash, and it includes, too, the social life that encircles film-going, the way of life of the movie addict with other movie addicts, and the way this or that film, which needn't be great or even good, gets "into the nation's blood-stream." Time and again she stresses this passionately personal involvement in the cinema, its central place in modern life: "the most total and encompassing art form we have," she calls it; and also, characteristically, "a tawdry corrupt art for a tawdry corrupt world."

> To be a casual critic is to be no critic at all [Kael writes] and for one whose interest is more than casual, it's painful to write about movies just occasionally, or to order. What is missing is the connection—or context—in which movies are a continuing art. In such frustrating circumstances each review one writes has to take for granted a whole succession of unwritten reviews that would have established the basis for one's criticism.

IN OTHER WORDS, film-going isn't done in jerks, occasionally and fortuitously, but is a continuous process, an experience that becomes part of living—enriching, enfolding, multiplying, colouring (any image you like)—yeast, dye, drug, substance rather than accidents, texture rather than decoration.

There can't be many more deeply "inside" the cinema (who haven't gone boss-eyed in the process); more cinematic in reaction, feeling, eyesight; more fully aware of the possibilities (visual, social, emotional, dramatic, operatic, exploratory) of an art that began as Punch-and-Judy, slap-happy and primitive. Yet she has none of the tiresome "insideness" of so many, the air of using a private language, of dealing with something esoteric. She never gives you the feeling that the film world is a big bland mutual-admiration society or else a place of secret rites, and that film critics are a coven of experts whose opinions are facts and who, by saying so often enough, can actually *make* Alfred Hitchcock or Samuel Fuller the greatest artist since Michelangelo. In fact she is pretty free with slashing individual opinions, swiping at current ideas and refusing to take with

[3] *The Film Criticism of Otis Ferguson.* Edited and with a preface by ROBERT WILSON. Temple University Press, Philadelphia, $12.50.

[4] *Going Steady.* By PAULINE KAEL. Atlantic-Little, Brown, $6.95.

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total solemnity and dedication people like Ingmar Bergman or Jean-Luc Godard. She refuses, too, to take the good-bad too seriously, to inflate a film like *The Graduate*, say, into something profounder than it started out to be. She isn't epigrammatic or particularly quotable, like Sarris; indeed at first her style seems a little stolid, a bit too dense and emphatic. But you soon realise there's just too much to say, too little space to say it in, so things have to be compressed and chopped and shorthanded. And there are piercing insights that go far beyond description, a kind of flaying of the outer skin of reality; like this description of Julie Christie as "lewd and anxious, expressive and empty, brilliantly faceted but with something central missing, almost as if there's no woman inside."

STANLEY KAUFFMANN'S REVIEWS,[5] mostly from the *New Republic* and with a few from the *New American Review, New York Times* and others, cover many of the same films as Pauline Kael's do (late '60s, early '70s), which makes for amusing comparison. In fact half the fun of reprinted reviews is the often opposite reactions they record to the same incident, same face, same direction. He agrees in lambasting Julie Christie ("What has happened to her lower lip? It was always large; now it just seems to hang there, immobile, while she chatters away behind it"); but in general is less brisk and dismissive than she is. Richard Lester, whom she snuffs out as "a shrill scold in Mod clothes," he takes seriously. Lindsay Anderson, whom she calls "a scourge, not a poet," he finds "the best directorial talent in British film history." He lacks her whipping energy and ability to put about ten separate thoughts and the ideas they generate into a couple of lines without seeming to squash or simplify them too absurdly; but then his whole cast of mind is different and these differences of mind are what makes comparison fruitful. Where she is concentrated, he is discursive, where she is readably fierce and goes into battle with all prejudices blazing he is fair-minded and good-mannered. Where she is exhaustively (sometimes exhaustingly) knowledgeable he is well-informed, and where she rattles along like machine-gun fire he is conversational. To the waspish world of film criticism he brings a civilised touch and that makes for pleasant company. This isn't to damn with faint praise: up there, among the best of the critics, pleasant company is rather rare.

MOST FILM CRITICS, I think, don't dare to make for pleasantness. Unpleasantness is generally more readable, as bad news makes better copy than good, and there's an ignoble streak in his readers that makes every hatchet-man's public cheer when he says the unkind things they may secretly be feeling but can't quite bring themselves to say. Plain bitchiness is funny when you see it in plain print, especially in an otherwise staid and sobersided context. John Simon is a pragmatic, self-confident reviewer, whose confidence acts emotionally on his readers, scooping them up into at least momentary agreement. How can you (at least at the time of reading him) disagree with such fluency and speed and funniness? Filmgoing, with him, seems easy, not tortuous and anguished and heroic and dark and desperate, as it is with Pauline Kael—an outing, not an ordeal, an almost daylight occupation, part of a wide-ranging culture that isn't going to be penned indoors forever or to think in purely visual terms. This is both a strength and a weakness: he isn't going to be limited by the film outlook, but he isn't totally film-minded either. His most memorable quality is immense dismissiveness, and his two books of reviews[6] are peppered with quotable contempt:

> "If you can imagine a high-school version of *Brief Encounter* grafted on to an Eskimo adaptation of *A Doll's House*, poorly photographed, leadenly acted, with dialogue (I happen to know Hungarian) almost as bad as the subtitles. . . ."
>
> "The combination of intense lack of talent and looks with scenes of hermetic emptiness represents a new high in minimal art, cinematic division."
>
> "*Hello Dolly!* is a multimillion-dollar musical superbore, which, along with *Paint Your Wagon*, seems to have killed off the genre of the huge, extravagant movie musical."

Every page steamrollers a film or two, but he has his admirations as well. Not often, but sometimes; and then one cheers and tends to listen.

Worse are his what used to be called personal remarks—chilling strictures on people's appearance, though you might argue that if people display their persons for gain they must expect them to be remarked on. Worse because less justified, less objective. Talent and performance can be judged critically but who can possibly say objectively that Barbra Streisand is "pronouncedly ugly" or Glenda Jackson "almost frighteningly plain"? What scares one man out of his wits may ravish another, after all. But Simon seems, more than most, to treat comment as fact. Of Liza Minelli he says: "She cannot fake charm or acceptable looks." Of Elizabeth Taylor: "Just how garish her commonplace accent, squeakily shrill voice, and the childish petulance with which she delivers her lines are, my pen is neither leaky nor scratchy enough to convey." Of Glenda

[5] *Figures of Light*. By STANLEY KAUFFMANN. Harper & Row, $8.95.

[6] *Private Screenings*. By JOHN SIMON. Berkley Publishing Corporation, paper, $1.25. *Movies into Film*. By JOHN SIMON. The Dial Press, $9.95.

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Jackson: "Her features are heavy and somehow malevolent in their irregularity; her body is like a block of uncarved stone except for her much-revealed breasts, shaped like collapsing gourds." Or again:

> "Anna Wiazemsky, in private life Mme Godard, [is] possessed of the face of a horse, the teeth of a rabbit, and the expression of an amoeba".
>
> "Michael York is a supremely monotonous actor and has, moreover, the head of a blond rat".
>
> "Essy Persson has an ugly face, squat body, unsightly bosom, bad legs, stubby fingers and no acting ability".

And so on and so on. He does go lyrical over Judy Geeson, Joanna Shimkus, and Bill Sykes's dog in *Oliver!* He does admire Bergman and he can be careful, sensitive and painstaking when his interest is caught. But this isn't, human nature being what it is, what one best remembers. It is as hatchet-man that he excels, and a very neat-handed one, even when electric with bitterness and dislike. "The screenplay stands on tiptoe at the outermost edge of the suggestive and gazes yearningly down into the obscene." Witty images of the kind seem tossed off without effort, though one wonders how (about four-fifths of his pages being covered in them) he can bear to work for so little pleasure, so little love.

DWIGHT MACDONALD'S BOOK[7] I have left to the end because it isn't, like the others, a collection of film reviews but a collection of writings on the cinema spanning well over thirty years. He too can be a hatchet-man at times but he isn't merely or gratuitously demolishing, nor is he coolly offensive as (in retrospect) John Simon often seems. His brilliant demolition of Brigitte Bardot is now thirteen years old, yet what he says is still true, and with knobs on:

> "Bardot has become a grotesque, a product of biological over-specialisation like a borzoi; her face has been reduced to the sexual essentials and is, objectively considered, rather terrifying. A really innocent eye—of child or savage—would be scared to death by the close-ups: those huge staring eyes, the great thick-lipped toothy mouth, the cascades and whorls and fountains of yellow hair, like a witch-doctor's get-up. The mouth is alarming—'the better to eat you with, my dear'—and the whole face is brutal, but the hair is the thing. Sometimes it suggests a lion's mane, sometimes a baroque waterfall, sometimes the peruke of Louis XIV. The toucan has his bill and Bardot has her hair. Unhappily she has nothing else, dramatically speaking. Unlike her American opposite number, Miss Monroe, she has no lightness, no verve, no womanly softness, no change of pace, nothing but the petulant defiance of a depraved child."

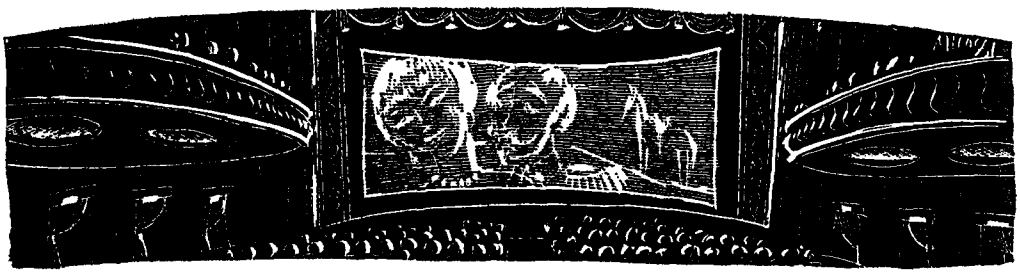
The great thing about Macdonald is that he goes right back, not as a film historian with hindsight but as a filmgoer with contemporary feelings about it, to the cinema of the 1920s. He ranges all over the film world in time and space and brings to it the sort of deep-focus eyesight that sees the background and the ancient parts of it as vividly as foreground and present.

> "This is a fast century [Macdonald writes]. A generation used to be twenty years, and is now closer to five and even in the older, traditional arts, a lot has happened in the forty years since I began writing about films. In the raw young medium of cinema, which is only two years older than I am (dating its birth as an art form around 1908, when D. W. Griffith began to invent its basic vocabulary all by himself), the pace has been headlong. Movie 'periods' are measured in decades rather than centuries, as in other art history."

He then defines three major periods: Classic Silent (1908–1929); Early, or Mediaeval, Sound (1930–1955) ("which could also be called Primitive if the comparison is to the later sound period, or Decadent if to the earlier silent period"); and Later, or Renaissance, Sound (1956 to date).

Earlier, no less than forty years earlier, at the exact end of the "Classic Silent" period, he writes more enthusiastically, ingenuously and perhaps pretentiously about the possibilities and glories of the cinema. "Forty years later," he says in a footnote to this, "[the general line of argument] seems to me ingenious, overstated and on the whole valid."

[7] *On Movies.* By DWIGHT MACDONALD. Berkley Publishing Corporation, $1.50, paperback.



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"This century, so indifferent to the poet and the painter, so warped and feeble in creative power, has strangely given birth to a new form of art that has already produced its masterpieces. If our writers are uninspired and our musicians impotent, at least the directors of our moving pictures have done work comparable to that of the past in emotional power and in beauty of form. On them has fallen the mantle of those great magicians of the Renaissance who called into being the thousand and one shapes of human passion and destiny. . . . Historically, it is to be expected that the movies should give us our highest type of aesthetic expression. Long ago the other arts reached, and passed, their climaxes in respect to technique: letters and the plastic arts in the Renaissance, music in the late eighteenth century. . . . In a word, the modern painter or musician arrives on the scene a century or two after the major battles in his art have been fought. Not so the movie director."

Brave words of a self-confessed pragmatist ready (when called upon) to eat them; to confess he has changed his mind. It makes for fun and surprises, he claims. So does his eyesight, which is vivid, varied and curious, and has parallels in film techniques, zooming from long-shot to close-up, from landscape to interiors, and recalling (for me, at least) Pope's extraordinary 18th-century prophecy of the cinema and all it involves in philosophical and psychological adjustment:

Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.

AUTHORS

Harry G. Johnson's books include *International Trade and Economic Growth* (1965), *World Economy at the Crossroads* (1965), *Essays in Monetary Economics* (1967), *The Two Sector Model of General Equilibrium* (1971) and *Macroeconomics and Monetary Theory* (1971). His essay in this issue originated as an informal talk to economics students at Amherst College, Massachusetts. . . .

Golo Mann is the distinguished German historian who lives in Switzerland, and he has been close to Auden since the marriage to his sister Erika. He is a son of Thomas Mann and author of the forthcoming biography of *Wallenstein,* which was a German bestseller. The author of many books including a *History of Germany since 1789* (1968); he writes regularly for ENCOUNTER, and his recent contributions include "Who Owns Heine?" (June 1973), "The History Lesson" (August 1972) and "Napoleon: A European Achievement" (December 1969). . . .

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John Taylor is Sir Hermann Bondi's successor as Professor of Mathematics at King's College, University of London, and has held Chairs of Physics at Rutgers and Southampton. His books include *Quantum Mechanics* (1970), *The New Physics* (1971) and *Black Holes* (Souvenir Press, 1973); Oxford University Press is to publish his *Special Relativity* next year. He is currently researching into the quantum mechanical aspects of gravity, the problem of matter in the centre of black holes, and neural networks in the brain. . . .

The picture of **Sir Karl Popper** in our January issue was taken by **Andrew Mummery.**

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Fleur Adcock

Please Identify Yourself

British, more or less; Anglican, of a kind.
In Cookstown I dodge the less urgent question
when a friendly Ulsterbus driver raises it:
"You're not a Moneymore girl yourself?" he asks,
deadpan. I make a cowardly retrogression,
slip ten years back. "No, I'm from New Zealand."
"Are you now? Well, that's a coincidence:
the priest at Moneymore's a New Zealander."
And there's the second question, unspoken.
Unanswered.
I go to Moneymore
anonymously, and stare at all three churches.

In Belfast, though, where sides have to be taken,
I stop compromising—not that you'd guess,
seeing me, hatless there among the hatted,
neutral voyeur among the shining faces
in the glossy Martyrs' Memorial Free Church.
The man himself is cheerleader in the pulpit
for crusader choruses: we're laved in blood,
marshalled in ranks. I chant the nursery tunes
and mentally cross myself. You can't stir me
with evangelistic hymns, Dr Paisley:
I know them. Nor with your computer-planned
sermon—Babylon, Revelation, whispers
of popery, slams at the IRA, more blood.
I scrawl incredulous notes under my hymnbook
and burn with Catholicism.
Later
hacking along the Lower Falls Road
against a gale, in my clerical black coat,
I meet a bright gust of tinselly children
in beads and lipstick and their mothers' dresses
for Hallowe'en; who chatter and surround me.
Overreacting once again (a custom
of the country, not mine alone) I give them
all my loose change for their rattling tin
and my blessing—little enough. But now
to my fierce Presbyterian ancestors,
Brooks and Hamilton, lying in the graves
I couldn't find at Moneymore and Cookstown
among so many unlabelled bones, I say:
I embrace you also, my dears.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from Germany

Hitler as Best-Seller

IN THE FIRST POST-WAR winter, when millions of Germans in the ruins were thinking of nothing but coal, cigarettes and calories, the writer Ernst Jünger, in the quiet of Kirchhorst, his farmhouse retreat in Lower Saxony, plucked up courage to deal with the phenomenon of Adolf Hitler. Jünger had been in a certain sense an intellectual harbinger of a National-Socialist movement but yet had remained on terms of sympathy with men of anti-Nazi sentiment; now, in his cool and dispassionate style, he wrote in his diary: "Today he is inevitably regarded as a pure provocateur. That is an estimate which, in the process of time, will be cut down to the size appropriate to it. The argument about Hitler will lead us back to his essential origins. . . ."

Twenty-seven years later this prophecy seems to be in process of fulfilment. For the first time the man who is, justifiably, the most hated and the most execrated of German statesmen is receiving what may be called his "historical due"—and not only here in Germany but abroad as well. More than that, for almost a year now we seem to have been in the midst of a Hitler renaissance, and it is affecting literature, theatre, films, television, and the record market. Surely there must be more to it than mere business and profit-making if two Hamburg weeklies, (*Stern* and *Der Spiegel*) with circulations in millions, serve up to their readers week by week extracts from new books about Hitler, books which are evidently assured of a place on the best-seller list even before they have appeared. Indeed Joachim Fest's new biography has already sold several hundred thousand copies in a few months. If on Sunday TV Werner Höfer's Round-table group can discuss the subject of Hitler over their *Frühschoppen* as if there could be nothing more urgent or topical, this is a sure sign that a vast public suddenly feels the need to be better informed on this "odious subject" (Golo Mann's phrase) and to look at him afresh, perhaps even with a more unprejudiced eye.

This newly-awakened interest is no accident. The number of Germans who have never even seen or heard Adolf Hitler is already larger than that of his surviving contemporaries. They are without passions or prejudices, feel no qualms or guilt and are looking only "to connect", to find some access to this unique historical figure, under whose rule their fathers' *Reich* was destroyed, Europe was cast down from her position of world pre-eminence, and millions upon millions of defenceless men, women and children were murdered.

As it also happens the older German generation, too, has reason to reconsider the unhappy past: the residual dispute between Hitler's legatees, the two German states of East and West, has recently been laid to rest. Since the fate of the German *Reich* has apparently been settled for the foreseeable future, now may be the time to ponder the career of the testator who bequeathed them so much misery.

THE STUDY OF HITLER and of National Socialism has passed through several phases since 1945. During the early years a voyeuristic curiosity predominated. Readers wanted eye-witness stories showing the *Führer* as he was seen by his chauffeur or valet or even more intimately:—"I was Hitler's tooth-brush." During the 1950s the tone was set by historians and journalists primarily concerned with the nation's good liberal repute. Either they simply labelled Hitler a "criminal" (Golo Mann found the whole subject so distasteful that he could only bring himself to use the initial letter "*H*") or they described him as a unique manifestation in German history and dismissed him into the realm of the irrational (a "devil" or a "trickster" or a "magician") or of the pseudo-clinical (demonically possessed, *von Dämonen besessen*).

All this was so obviously intended as a national apologia that in the 1960s the inevitable reaction set in under the influence of neo-Marxist critics. Hitler's personality was no longer at issue; it was regarded as irrelevant or interchangeable. Emphasis was now laid on the social forces which had driven him, inspired him, and presumably created him. Hitler was demoted to the status of minion of monopoly capitalism, and of greedy land-hungry militarists. He became the puppet of power-hungry string-pullers in heavy industry, high finance, and real estate. Critical historians have in the meantime readjusted this distorted

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picture: the majority of industrialists only moved over into the Nazi camp with their colours flying when Hitler had already come to power—though, admittedly, he did so with the help of certain unreconstructed Junkers and bankers. In fact, however, he was carried along by the millions of ordinary voters, primarily those of the impoverished middle class.

No doubt the capitalists profited from their alliance with Hitler. He procured them profitable orders; he tamed the working class; through his *Kriegspolitik* he held out to them the prospect of a colossal economic empire. There can, however, be no doubt that they (and why not all the other Germans too?) were the people who ought to have put the brakes on Nazism. The history of National-Socialism, that German version of fascism, cannot be divorced from Hitler any more than the victory of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia can be explained without Lenin.[1]

SO HITLER IS BEING RESTORED to some kind of "rightful place" in history. This, however, opens up the question of his historical stature, an idea which has become somewhat foreign to men of this century but which for thousands of years has fired the imagination of the contemporaries of some great statesman or war lord. Jacob Burckhardt's famous remark about great men might well be applied to Hitler: "History sometimes likes to concentrate itself into the person of one man, whom the world thenceforth obeys. . . ." For Burckhardt the criterion of true greatness was the fact that the great statesman concerned was fulfilling some purpose "transcending the individual, which, depending on the context, may be described as the will of God, the will of a nation or community, the will of an epoch. . . ."

The will of God? Here one is brought up short at once when one thinks of Auschwitz and Belsen (even though certain theologians have described Hitler as "the scourge of God"). And what is "the will of an epoch"? Is it palpable, does it exist anywhere but in the minds of propagandists and philosophers? Indisputably, however, during the years of his economic, foreign policy and military successes Hitler must have believed that he was fulfilling "the will of the Nation." He was not only meeting their requirements for *Arbeit und Brot*, work and bread; he was expunging the stain of their 1918 defeat; he personified the spoken or unspoken yearnings of the Germans for Great Power or World Power status, for *Glanz und Gloria*—though his nationalist policy ultimately degenerated into the most inhuman form of imperialism.

The will of the Nation? This, too, is scarcely a reliable or usable criterion. Terror, coercion, and propaganda played their part in forming this "will"; nevertheless, so long as no bombs were falling on their cities the majority of Germans gladly applauded the dictator, our *Führer*. When judgment was pronounced in Potsdam, the victors registered this fact with brutal clarity: now the German nation had to answer and atone for the frightful consequences of their lust for power and their deification of a national leader.

HAD HITLER SUCCEEDED in establishing upon the ruins of the old world his thousand-year Germanic empire, had he been able to put into practice his strange racio-biological ideas and form the "new mankind", the Germans would have labelled him *der Grosse* despite all his misdeeds. To quote Burckhardt again, "it all depends on success." Already the historians, including some foreign writers, allow him political genius, and one day we shall find that his qualities as a military commander will no longer be totally decried, as they usually are today.

Since, however, he left no legacy of value but was a destroyer of all things, history will tend

[1] See Joachim Fest's interpretation of this point in his Hitler essay in ENCOUNTER, October 1973, pp. 18–36.

Score Card

London

SIR ALEC GUINNESS'S *recent screen performance of Adolf Hitler seems to have triggered off an extraordinary spate of books on the Nazi leader. David Irving, author of the controversial study of the Wartime Convoy PQ17, is now at work on a biography based on "an astonishing series of papers entrusted to the author alone by members of Hitler's former staff and never used before."*

It will be published next year by Hodder (who also did Colin Cross's Hitler last April), but not before the appearance of "The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler", which comes from Cape in October and which, apparently, includes the first account of the Fuhrer's visit to England in 1912. *Not before Walter Langer's "The Mind of Adolf Hitler", or Werner Maser's "Hitler" which draws on "a private notebook, discovered in an attic", and "a medical dossier, mislaid for many years". Nor before Weidenfeld's new edition of Hitler's "Table Talk", "an extraordinary document for many years unobtainable," or Boldt's eye-witness account of "Hitler's Last Days", or Fontana's book of the film, or a biography by one James Bunting, who met him twice.*

Hitler, we hardly knew you. . . .

EVENING STANDARD

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perhaps to allot him only a "negative greatness" In this he can be compared to Napoleon. Napoleon, too, destroyed and set up empires at his whim, subjected the whole of Europe to the horrors of war, unscrupulously sacrificed hundreds of thousands of men in insane campaigns, and fought on until the enemy was at the gates of his own capital. Nevertheless, some decades later the French brought his bones back from St Helena for solemn burial in the Invalides. They had not forgotten his victories of Jena and Austerlitz, his campaigns in Italy, or his foray into Egypt.

Can it be, then, that the Germans will one day celebrate the battles of Dunkirk, Narvik and Crete? I think not. And what of Auschwitz? Can the concept of "negative greatness" be applicable at all here? So much is, I think, worth noting: other countries are not afraid to acknowledge the murky periods of their history; the Russians have not banished Ivan the Terrible from their portrait galleries or the British their Oliver Cromwell; the Italians have not erased the chiselled name of Mussolini from the monumental obelisk in the Forum Romanum.

For a long time, too long a time, the Germans have closed their eyes to Hitler—not unlike the deep unwillingness which made them curiously aloof from the *Widerstand*, the ill-fated conspirators of 20 July 1944. The one has been the counterpart of the other. Hitler has been pushed into the background as irrelevant to history, into a "memory hole"; and no political account has been taken of the heroic men of the resistance despite all the eulogies of anniversary speeches.

No German generation, however, can afford to disregard Hitler. The man who challenged an entire world and led his people to the pinnacle of power and then into a bottomless pit, is and will remain that which Goebbels, using the words in a very different sense, always called him on the eve of his birthday—*unser Hitler*, "our Hitler."

Karl-Heinz Janssen

Restoring Rabindranath Tagore

By Mary M. Lago

IN 1960 I began learning to read and write the Bengali language. I hoped to learn enough to be able to sing a few of the nearly 2,000 songs written, words and music both, by Rabindranath Tagore, who is known to the West as the winner of the 1913 Nobel Prize for Literature; as a songwriter he is known to us virtually not at all. I had heard Bengali students at my university sing some of these *Rabindrasangeet*—"Rabindranath's songs"—and had been astonished and delighted by their variety and intensity, their poetry and sheer beauty of melodic line. I found that I could learn the melodies by rote, line by line, but the words had no direct meaning for me, and memorising them came very hard. Thus I had begun, in quite an offhand manner, to learn Bengali.

This effort preceded by several years the University's academic programme of South Asian Studies. For a time, after Bengali studies had become a part of this curriculum, I felt somewhat deprived because I had not begun with the methods and technological equipment of modern linguistics. Yet there were benefits to beginning as I did, with the help of a Jewish friend who had been a lifelong resident of Calcutta, and with only one book. All that winter, we met regularly and consumed countless cups of strong tea while we worked my way through the first volume of *Shahaj Pâth* (*Easy Reading*), a series of four readers written by Tagore for the purpose of teaching Bengali to Bengali children. Couplets accompanied by charming woodcuts introduce the learner to the sounds and shapes of letters of the Bengali alphabet. The simplest poem or story in the book declares Tagore's conviction that readers of even first primers are able to appreciate the beauties of a fine language finely used. Even now, while riding on trains or waiting for traffic lights to change, I sometimes recite silently the opening lines of one of the first poems in *Shahaj Pâth:*

Bâgh âche âm-bone.
Gâye châkâ châkâ dâg.

In the mango-grove the tiger,
On his body round round spots.

What a difference, what a wide world of difference between this and the primers from which my children had read in their supposedly progressive school! Theirs was that sickly series of books featuring three WASPish children named Jane, Dick, and Sally, and an antiseptic dog named Spot. "See Spot run. Run Spot run"

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is a typical line; it has become a standard tag for references to pedagogical inanity. Where are the richly rolling, ear-satisfying sounds of "*Bâgh âche âm-bone*"? The dog Spot might as well be made of plastic; he summons up no connotations of Nature bright and brutal ("Tyger! Tyger! burning bright") such as are evoked by "*Gâye châkâ châkâ dâg.*"

Am I responding chiefly to a milder manifestation of the urge to confront primeval nature, which has impelled countless sahibs and memsahibs to perch uncomfortably in trees, in hopes of acquiring a tiger skin for the library floor? Perhaps I am. But there is no affinity at all between the tiger-shooting mentality and a quatrain a few pages farther on in *Shahaj Pâth:*

Kâlo râti gaelo ghuce,
Âlo târe dilo muche.
Pub dike ghum-bhângâ
Hâshe ushâ cokh-rângâ.

Black night is passing away,
Light is wiping it out.
In the East awakening
Dawn laughs rosy-eyed.

The little poem overflows with the exuberance of a fine new day, which is echoed by the very sounds of the words. The clipped consonants of "*ghum-bhângâ*"—"sleep-breaking"—drop a phonological shutter between night and morning. The sibilants and the long *â*'s of "*Hâshe ushâ*"—"laughs [the] dawn"—have the cadence of incantation. One slips easily into the more familiar context of Greek mythology, in which Phoebus ascends the heavens, and realises at once that this Bengali dawn is different; it is not a conquering hero in a chariot, but a charming girl laughing for the sheer joy of existence. Rare indeed is the day on which the American child finds in his primer a passage of such cultural and poetic richness.

TAGORE'S SONGS offer still greater riches: a vast range of moods and styles; marvellous imagery, both verbal and musical; a compendium of disparate sources, for Tagore was an indefatigable collector and adapter. Whatever music he heard supplied melodic materials for songs upon which he placed his unique seal of the *Rabindra-sangeet*: Hindustani *râga*, Bengali boatmen's songs, Vaishnava *kirttan*, Bāul devotional songs, even songs popular in the West that he had picked up during his travels abroad. The more intensely Indian his sources, the finer his songs—and the more difficulty I had in learning them, for they have turns of phrasing and rhythm unfamiliar to the usual singer of Western music. Some of these turns I never mastered, but, in the process of trying, I gained some idea of the comprehensiveness of Tagore's understanding

A

SPLENDOR AND DEATH OF JOAQUÍN MURIETA

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of the synthetic nature of Bengali culture. *Rabindrasangeet* are like no Western songs that I know. They are less formal than *lieder* or art songs but more consciously refined than songs that we tend to classify as folk music. Yet there can be not the least doubt that Tagore's songs speak the emotional language of Bengal. Mr Nixon and Professor Kissinger, had they listened carefully to the songs that Tagore wrote during the successful Bengali protest against Lord Curzon's 1905 attempt to partition Bengal, might have guessed that the Bangla Desh uprising in 1971 was not to be lightly manipulated or turned aside.

I CAME NEXT to Tagore's short stories and to the discovery that some of his finest short fiction was never translated for Western readers during the years of his greatest popularity in the United States and England, a popularity that reached its peak just before World War I and by 1920 had begun to fade. The first of these stories that I translated without tutor or collaborator at hand was "*Khâtâ*"—"*The Notebook*"[1]—a very short story about a nine-year-old girl, passionately in love with the written word, who is married off to a man in his twenties, an insufferable prig and intellectual dilettante who destroys, effectively and forever, her access to and enjoyment of this means of expression. A glance at this story reminds me, a decade later, of the claustrophobic greyness of the November afternoon during which I translated it. I recall the feeling of urgent, almost panicky involvement with which I worked my way from sentence to sentence. Limping along with the aid of a dictionary, as I was obliged to do, did not destroy the shape and tension that Tagore had built into the story. That shape remained, somewhat diffuse at the outset but honed to a deadly cutting edge as the story progresses to its conclusion. Tension, literal as well as literary, had small connection with the ordinary desire to learn how a story turns out, or even with my tenacity as a novice translator from Bengali; but it had everything to do with the author's skill as a writer of short fiction. The homesick girl, Uma, cut off from her own affectionate family, is spied upon by three addle-pated and undoubtedly illiterate sisters-in-law. They catch her writing in the notebook that contains her laboured efforts at composition and various passages copied out from favourite books, and "in fear and shame she hid her face on the bed." Her husband, Pyarimohan, sententiously disapproves, scolds Uma, and ridicules her a little: "You'll have to order a turban so that the housewife can go to the office with a pen behind her ear."

> Uma didn't get the point. She had never read Pyarimohan's essays, and therefore her literary taste had not been fully developed. But she shrank within herself. She thought that if the world would split in two, she could find a place to hide her shame.

Again the spying sisters-in-law find her writing, fail to wrest the notebook from her, and call Pyarimohan, who orders her to hand it over. "She threw it down and, hiding her face with both hands, fell on the floor, utterly stricken." Pyarimohan reads her writings grotesquely aloud while the sisters-in-law shake with laughter.

> After that Uma never had that notebook again. Pyarimohan also had a notebook filled with essays on subtle and thorny theories, but there was no one at hand to snatch and destroy that notebook for the good of humanity.

NEXT, AND FINALLY, I came to the work of editing the thirty years' correspondence between Tagore and William Rothenstein, prime mover and principal promoter of Tagore's career as an international figure. I had learned, before I had progressed very far in *Shahaj Pâth,* that there are enormous discrepancies between the texts of Bengali poems and short stories in other books by Tagore, and the English versions of those works familiar to us. The English texts were prepared by Tagore and a wide assortment of Indian collaborators whose work often reveals the inadequacy of their mastery over the nuances of the English language. To these were added Western collaborators and editors whose knowledge of Bengali was, in the great majority of cases, wholly nonexistent. The English texts became in turn the basis for translations into still other languages, again by translators who were not native speakers of English, knew little or no Bengali, and must therefore work from the English texts. At each new remove, the discrepancies were multiplied.

It seemed, therefore, that the Rothenstein-Tagore correspondence might serve not only as the record of an important international friendship, but also as context for an instructive and salutary case study in the problems of translation. However, Tagore had not given translation as a craft the priority it deserves and demands, and this failure was a major reason for the decline of his popularity in the West. The completed annotations to the letters made crystal clear the fact that what I had in hand was a case study in how *not* to go about the work of translation. I removed the section of my Introduction in which I had explained some of the specialised

[1] Rabindranath Tagore, "The Notebook" ("*Khâtâ,*" 1893?) in his *The Housewarming and Other Selected Writings,* trans. Mary Lago and Tarun Gupta, ed. Amiya Chakravarty (New York: New American Library, 1965), pp. 29–34.

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problems involved in translating from Bengali to English, a deletion that suggested a sadly ironic but accurate parallel: Tagore's international commitments as lecturer, educator, and unofficial cultural ambassador-at-large had pushed aside what should have been a fundamental concern for the craft of translation; they pushed it also out of my book.[2]

I discovered, in far greater documentary detail than I had imagined existed, the gulf of misinformation and non-information that stands between the tough-minded, realist author of works like "The Notebook" and the West's facile stereotype of Tagore as otherworldly mystic and slightly effeminate guru. I found, however, that it is very difficult to study Tagore in well-rounded relation to Rothenstein and other indispensable associates in the West, for the admirers who cherish the guru-stereotype have kept Tagore relentlessly isolated at stage front and centre. This isolation has kept him out of the mainstream of modern literature and literary criticism and is another major factor in the decline of his popularity among readers in the West. It further helps to account for our failure to realise that Tagore's works translated into English between 1912 and 1925—too often chosen for apparent conformity to the stereotype —were not always his best in Bengali.

A MAJOR PORTION of responsibility for this failure must be assigned, not to the Macmillan firms, Tagore's publishers in London and New York, but to Tagore himself, to some of those who advised him during his lifetime, and to his heirs and executors since his death in 1941. All other considerations were—and, it seems, are—conditioned by the fact that the West had paid homage to Tagore in 1913; the literary, economic, and political realities of mid-century seem scarcely to have touched that Wonderland of the Nobel Prize year. One of the saddest of the thousands of letters that I read in the course of my research was written to the London Macmillans in 1959 by Tagore's son Rathindranath; rather wistfully he asked why so few of his father's books were in print. A Macmillan executive had replied kindly and quite gently, repeating what the royalty reports had manifested for four decades past: the demand for Rabindranath's translated works had dwindled steadily and was now very small. Rathindranath wrote that he

[2] Published as "Translating Tagore: A Case Study in Literary Exchange," *Books Abroad* (University of Oklahoma), Summer, 1972. The Rothenstein-Tagore correspondence, *Imperfect Encounter: Letters of William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore, 1911-1941*, ed. Mary M. Lago (Harvard University Press, 1972).

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had not realised that this was the case; he hoped that the Tagore Centenary in 1961 might stimulate interest.[3]

A PATTERN of contradictory reactions was introduced again and again by Tagore himself, in letters to Rothenstein and other friends in the West, and now in his executors' letters to me. On the one hand is a recognition of the passage of the great days of Nobel fame and fortune; on the other hand is a dreamlike obliviousness to this fact. On the one hand, mournful or resentful comment on the failure of Western writers and publishers to keep in touch with his works and with the realities of Bengali life and history; on the other, monotonous litanies of famous names as proof that Tagore was seen and heard among the world's great. Between these extremes yawns an emptiness, a vast area of failed cultural communications. This emptiness discouraged and finally defeated the staunchest among Tagore's friends and well-wishers in England, and, in several instances, it defeated me. In letters from his executors to me, I can find virtually no recognition of the fact that the Rothenstein-Tagore correspondence is the work of Tagore *and* Rothenstein. There is no curiosity about whether Rothenstein's heirs felt entitled to, or had asked for, a share of any royalties that might result from my work. (The Rothenstein family had asked nothing, but the Tagore estate demanded, and got, $1,000: a $500 permission fee and a $500 payment against a continuing percentage of any royalties.) I can detect no hint of concern about the burden of my investment in this research which, his then executor hoped, might help to revive the West's drooping interest in Tagore.

I had hoped that I would be able to include in annotations a number of passages from many other unpublished letters from Tagore to correspondents other than Rothenstein; these amplify allusions, sometimes quite obscure in his letters to Rothenstein, to the nearly intolerable social, political, and personal pressures that complicated Tagore's international activities and kept him from devoting adequate time and attention to the selection and translation of his works. I had hoped to present him, in such situations, as much as possible in his own words, but I was forced to paraphrase instead. His executor wanted money for every word quoted; I had no more money for this book.[4]

IDEALLY, money ought not to have anything to do with it. It is impossible—heaven be thanked—to place a monetary value on all that I have gained from reading *Shahaj Pâth*, from *Rabindrasangeet*, from stories like "The Notebook." But literary research of this kind is costly and cannot, in the long run, be separated from economic realities. What I particularly wish to say is this: I am grateful for this literary and aesthetic experience and for the marvellous manner in which it has widened the horizons of my life, but I wish also to recommend three fundamental considerations for the concern of those who control the availability of Tagore's works today:

First, as should have been demonstrated by the disastrous consequences of Tagore's habit of leaving translation to simultaneous but marginal attentions of too many persons of divergent cultural outlook, translation cannot be done by committee. It requires the time, energy, and sustained efforts of congenial individuals working as literary craftsmen, not as middlemen. Foundations and committees will sometimes come to their aid, as the American Philosophical Society (Penrose and Johnson Funds) came to mine at crucial stages in 1967 and 1968, but this does not usually happen until after the individual demonstrates competence and commitment; meanwhile, he must pay the costs of this commitment.

[3] Rathindranath Tagore to Daniel Macmillan, April 8, July 1, 1959. Macmillan (London) office correspondence. It is not true, as is often claimed, that Macmillan deliberately rushed Tagore's books on to the market and thus flooded it, or that Tagore did not receive a fair share of the profits. Tagore files in the Macmillan archives in London (British Museum) and New York (New York Public Library) prove that it was Tagore and his assistants who sent manuscripts in rapid succession to both Macmillan firms, while the directors of the firms exchanged misgivings and tried to slow this suicidal pace of publication. Royalty reports attached to copies of their letters and acknowledged by Tagore show that his percentages and receipts were extremely impressive, and that Tagore, whose tough-mindedness did not extend to the management of his personal accounts, did not always quote them accurately. See *Imperfect Encounter*, pp. 221–223.

[4] In 1969, soon after conclusion of this complex agreement, which cost me a further $100 in legal fees, Tagore's executrix died, and ownership of certain copyrights was thrown into the Calcutta courts. In the ensuing confusion no one informed me of the identity of the new executor. Not wishing to be accused of reneging in the agreement, after *Imperfect Encounter* appeared, I sent the second $500 to the Publishing Department of Visva-Bharati University and requested that it be forwarded to the appropriate person. I also remarked on the contrast between the Rothensteins' generosity and the attitude of the Tagore executors. In due course I received a very gracious reply from the new court-appointed executor, who apologised for his predecessor's lack of sensitivity to the nature of the relationship between Rothenstein and Tagore, and offered to return my cheque and accept whatever settlement I thought appropriate. It would have been pleasant to be able to return generosity for his graciousness, but I could not afford to be gracious; I took back the second cheque, leaving the first $500 as full and final payment.

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Second, Tagore's Bengali writings, when read in the contexts of his personality and the pressures under which he lived and worked, do not, on balance, confirm the guru-stereotype that the West is still over-eager to fasten on Indians whose appearance and diction seem to fit our preconceived notions of how a prophet ought to look and sound. Tagore was a brilliant, complex, and courageous man who was sometimes confused by the pressures exerted upon him. The man has been obscured by the fogs of devotional rhetoric that surround the stereotype, and too many critics in the West, misled by the mere fact of perpetuation, have assumed its validity. The consequences for Tagore are all the more tragic if this assumption leads to rejection.

And third: if Tagore is to be seen in the full perspective of the truly epochal literary exchange of which he was a part, there must be an end to the bland assumption that the centre of the stage belongs to him alone. He was the star of a drama that culminated in a Nobel Prize, but he had a remarkable supporting cast, and the stellar reputations of those supporters played a large role in attracting so much attention so quickly to the new star. I cannot think of any comparable instance of an unknown writer being introduced through the concerted efforts of so many front-rank literary figures. They are the stars of other dramas on other stages and do not need Tagore's reflected light, but we need the aesthetic pleasure and the political enlightenment to be gained from acquaintance with Tagore's unknown works.

Italy's "Cultural Crisis"

Letter from Rome—By FRANÇOIS BONDY

ONE ALWAYS senses here the fundamental split between State and Culture, and Italian culture today is both accuser and accused.

Over eighty college professors are active in the political life of Italy, in both Parliament and the Senate. The President of the Republic and several ministers have occupied, or still occupy, professorial chairs, Why, then, do all Italian official publications go on and on about the "shipwreck of culture"? Why do they keep on expressing "grave disquiet" over the chasm between public life and cultural activity? Both the *Corriere della Sera* and *L'Europeo* have carried out enquiries among writers, film producers, architects, lecturers, and "cultural managers." There and elsewhere, too, the same complaint and the same indictment is to be heard; in innuendos, in polemics, and in discussions, the same spirit of resignation or revolt is to be found, and this applies even to the older generation, generally regarded as responsible. In the list of national shortcomings three points stand out: (1) the divorce between the State and the political parties on the one hand and culture on the other; (2) lack of a "sense of responsibility" among cultural leaders; (3) the increasing grip exerted by industry on the press and publishing world.

The State's lack of interest in culture is ascribed first to the effect of historical tradition ever since the Counter-Reformation—but also to the effect of present-day politicians who do not feel themselves obliged to be at all concerned about culture. Those ministers who still occupy professorial chairs keep them although they cannot fulfil their academic duties. Many of them occupy chairs in several different cities and employ substitutes. No great reforms are to be expected from them.

University degrees have become increasingly devalued, and many teachers of repute argue that the old "laurea" should be abolished. Nepotism and good connections rather than ability govern appointments to professorships, like much else in Italy. Moreover, the more gifted students no longer aim for a university career since they find that other callings can provide them with greater advantages and prestige. Research receives less support from the state or the great industrial concerns than in any other modern country. Italy can now barely produce a research worker of international repute. The poet Eugenio Montale said: "In a few years' time Italy will be full of unemployed intellectuals with worthless degrees. . . ."

In an interview, Carlo Bo, a well-known professor and author, was deeply pessimistic: "I

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think there is a state of neglect, of inaction and of despair which could not be more dramatic. There is no continuity. The intellectual does not get a hearing and has lost all standing. Our universities are now mere factories for superfluous degrees...."

Among those whom I asked none had a good word to say for the whole system from the primary school to graduate research (apart from some efforts being made in places like Pisa and some signs of renewed interest in the universities). Dr Faeda, the mathematician and president of the Rectors Conference, lamented: "We have over 8,000 undergraduates. Italian universities have become mass institutions—without being organised as such...."

THE OLDER GENERATION WISTFULLY RECALLS the great hopes of the anti-Fascists and the excitement of 1945. Ignazio Gardella, the architect, said; "After the liberation we, the architects of Milan, initiated a lively dialogue between culture and politics. Now that is all gone. As far as town planning is concerned hundreds of schemes have remained paper plans only. Our best architects are people who paint the walls while the house is burning. We are bogged down in an outdated economic system and have no pattern of a new society to inspire us. We have less of a dialogue with the young than our parents had with us. Our great mistake was not that we worked within the system but that we did not exploit our successes to change the system from within...."

GIORGIO STREHLER, director of the Piccolo Theatre in Milan, said: "We were a generation without teachers. We hunted through the libraries and had to discover the world for ourselves. We had no orientation from the past and perhaps we invented it all. The present generation will have nothing to do with what we call orientation or the past...."

In Strehler's view, like many of the others who were interviewed, the dramatic turning-point was the decision of Togliatti, the late Communist leader, to allow *Politecnico*, the popular cultural periodical run by Elio Vittorini, to cease publication; the Communists were the only major party whose cultural policy seemed to hold out some hope. Those I questioned, however, invariably emphasised that the Christian Democratic party had been in power all the time and it could not really be called a "disappointment" since it had never had any cultural policy at all. Strehler also indulged in some self-criticism: "Very few of us took it upon ourselves to work in political organisations. We would demonstrate or sign some petition, but we would not do day-to-day low-level work. Everyone in Venice protested about the Statute of the *Biennale*, but what came of it all? Nothing. Everyone went home and busied himself with his own affairs. We have become incapable of bringing our problems to the political authorities...."

THE PERSISTENT THEME at present is that all this is "the writers' fault"—but this argument disregards the vital point that Italian society contains very few readers of books. Here the foreigner who rightly admires present-day Italian literature is in for a shock. With writers such as Palezzeschi, Montale, Silone, Landolfi, Piovene and Moravia in the older generation—Sciascia, Natalia Ginzburg and Calvino in the middle generation, and Malerba, Sanguinetti, Manganelli and Anna Banti among the younger—with critics such as Pampaloni, Paolo Milano, and Arbasino (at least twenty more new literary names could be mentioned such as Arpino, Tobino, Cassola and Gianna Manzini)—the European reader is unlikely to have an impression of sterility or provincialism, about which there is so much talk nowadays. Moreover, many daily newspapers in Italy pay considerable attention to cultural matters and the ties between literature and journalism are closer in Italy than elsewhere. Ennio Flaiano and Dino Buzzati, for instance, were well-known as

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both men of letters and newspapermen. The connection between literature and the films is also very close. Pasolini is an author and film-producer, Bertolucci began as a poet, Moravia is a film critic and Malerba a script-writer.

Compared with most other European countries, therefore, Italy is cutting rather a good figure, their own favoured "*buona figura*." The fact must not be overlooked, however, that the percentage of Italians who read at least "one book a year" is the smallest in Europe—smaller even than in Spain and Portugal. The *Corriere della Sera* recently reported that out of every hundred adults the following had read "at least one book in 1971":

66 Dutchmen
63 Englishmen
56 Frenchmen
52 West Germans
40 Spaniards
28 Portuguese
24 Italians

This is a statistical fact which no one would suspect when visiting the attractive book-shops in the major cities or admiring the plethora of new editions (in particular the translations); certainly no one would suspect it as he meets the many brilliantly-informed and highly cultivated intellectuals in every urban centre. As Renato Guttuso says: "The average Italian, even in a senior position, is less cultivated than the average Frenchman, Englishman, or German. There are many reasons for this—our schools are worse, for instance, but another reason lies in the mechanics of education and cultural life outside the schools. . . ."

Clearly there are two Italys; and the second Italy, that of the illiterates or semi-illiterates, the "strip-cartoon (*fumetti*) readers", is larger than the uncultivated mass in the rest of Europe. Can the writers be put in the dock because they do not make an impact on a non-reading public? The accusation reminds me of the exhortation which used to appear regularly in Spanish newspapers: "ILLITERATES, LEARN TO READ!"

It is clearly a question of schooling, of the entire educational system and structure of government and not—as Goffredo Parise, for instance, likes to argue—the fault of the writers because they use too many complicated words and are too divorced from "the facts of life." Latin American writing, for instance—today perhaps the most interesting literature in the world—is not "popular" in this simple sense; yet its good authors make their impact on hundreds of thousands of readers. To say, as the *Corriere della Sera* has done, that "culture has been ship-wrecked", as if literature had ever been at the

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helm, is to forget that the ship was not seaworthy to begin with.

THE STRIKING FEATURE for me is the transition from pristine illiteracy to a neo-illiteracy consisting of *fumetti* readers and "goggle-box" addicts. Marshall McLuhan's thesis about the devaluation of literary culture does apply to Italy, but his optimistic forecast that the new media would produce a fresh community of interests does not; that hasn't happened.

The problem, therefore, is that the state is not interested in culture; that culture makes no impact on the people; and that, educated society being middle-class, culture comes under the influence of big-business interests. As a result newspapers such as *Il resto del Carlino* which have traditionally had a cultural background, suddenly turn over to strict conservatism on change of ownership. And newspapers have always been a major factor in Italian culture.

Could the intellectuals have done more? The question is otiose, for the problem is one of the future, not of the past. It is striking nevertheless that some of the scientists and artists whom I have been questioning were not completely pessimistic and could still see certain prospects. It is discouraging, however, that basic school and university reforms are still awaited, that research policy is in decline, and that each government seems to accept its failure with equanimity. Moreover, the phenomenon of "anti-culture" does not spring merely from the necessities of a so-called backward country. Whole classes of society who have recently achieved an improved standard of living take remarkably little interest in cultural activities. The Italian "economic miracle" was admittedly incomplete but the extent to which culture—the most glaring instance being town planning—lagged behind has been something of a "miracle in reverse." So the talk of a cultural *malaise,* of the failure of the political forces to cope with educational problems, is not without justification. It is to be seen everywhere in the "way of life" and will sooner or later exert an adverse influence even on material developments. The bitter self-criticism, the vocal discontent, has its good reasons. Strehler talks of a "slimy morass." Alfonso Gatto tries to explain: "In Italy the authorities have no interest in culture. Our rulers are basically devoid of culture. At the same time all politicians are prepared to swear that Culture is Essential. It is all the outcome of great narrow-mindedness, of the banality of conformism. . . ."

THERE IS, HOWEVER, no point in trying to turn the intellectuals of "the 1945 generation" into scapegoats, particularly in so far as the writers are concerned. Such an indictment surely derives from a completely false concept of the duties and possibilities of literature. Writers who allow themselves to be influenced by such accusations and demands would only write worse books. Still, the challenge is clear. Can they—and how—make a contribution to the growing (and daunting) necessity to overcome Italy's cultural underdevelopment?

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Douglas Dunn

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A Special Book Section

Science

The Alexandrian Trap

Thoughts on "The Eternal Scientist"—By STEPHEN TOULMIN

ONE HUNDRED and thirty-three years ago, in the year 1840—several years before the American Association for the Advancement of Science was founded—William Whewell, the great historian and philosopher of science and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, gave an address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in whose early activities he was a leading figure. In that address he coined (and used in public for the first time) a new word: a word which is on all our lips today, yet one whose success and consequences he could hardly have foreseen himself. By inventing it, he undoubtedly helped to "advance" science, as science needed to be advanced in his time. Yet there is something about the whole episode that prompts the question, "Just *how* are the interests of Science to be best 'advanced'? Or does Science have different needs—needs for different kinds of advancement—in every epoch, every century, even perhaps in every decade? . . ."

For Whewell's word was the simple, familiar term *scientist*. Before he coined that term, there was no common and accepted professional name shared by mathematical, experimental, or natural philosophers, gentlemen naturalists, virtuosi, savants, and curious inquirers into pneumatic chemistry, optics, or vegetable staticks. By contrast—as Whewell argued—*artists* had a common name and formed a common profession, with recognised standards of craftsmanship, established procedures of apprenticeship and training, and the rest. And it was up to students of the natural sciences to follow suit, if their activities were to achieve anything like the same professional status and respectability: they must become, in a word, "scientists"—artists of science, with all that this entailed.[1]

Looking back from the present day, it may seem strange that men had got by for so long without that useful word. Yet this very fact itself only illustrates a broader point, with which I shall be chiefly concerned in the present article. It is this. If the men who deal in a critical, innovative way with our ideas about the natural world have been known by such different names at different places and times, this is because the very enterprise in which they had been engaged has been viewed in an entirely different light in different milieux. Joseph Needham has asked, "Why did Chinese science never have its indigenous Galileo?"[2] And the answer he gives will do duty for the more general question also. For it turns out that this answer is a double one. Chinese science never had its Galileo because it never had its Euclid or Heraclides or Ptolemy; and that means it never had *either* accepted scholarly traditions of critical scientific thought *or* an established intellectual profession of critically minded men to pursue and develop it. In the classical Chinese milieu, as elsewhere, the ways in which men viewed the activities of science and its agents were two faces of a single coin. The character, the vigour, even the possibility of effective scientific enquiry (that is) all depended—as they still depend—on the existence of a suitable social and cultural context.

TO STATE MY general problem explicitly, then: If the natural sciences, and the men who pursue

[1] *Oxford English Dictionary* (1933), vol. IX, p. 223. SCIENTIST . . . **1840.** *Whewell,* "We need very much a name to describe a cultivator of science in general. I should incline to call him a Scientist."

[2] Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge, 1959), vol. 3, sec. 20.

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them, are viewed so differently in different cultures and epochs—so that a civilisation as ancient and sophisticated as that of classical China ended by providing no place for a Euclid or a Galileo—what are the factors that underlie these variations from milieu to milieu? Why classical Greece but not classical China? Why 16th-century Padua rather than 14th-century Brindisi? Why Samos in the 6th century B.C., and Pasadena in the 20th century A.D.? Why Göttingen and Königsberg and Aberdeen of all places? How does it come about that science could be effectively pursued here rather than there, now rather than then, continuously rather than intermittently? If we had answers to all these questions, we should be well on the way to a new level of self-awareness and self-understanding in our attitudes towards science. We should have achieved a fully-fledged, well-established view of the comparative history and sociology of science, of a kind that we now lack. For the moment, all we can do is to glimpse some of the key factors and relationships involved, and recognise certain of the key phenomena needing to be explained. And I want to pick on one of these phenomena as the starting-point for my discussion here, since it may help to throw some light on our own situation—and on the needs of Science—in the present decade.

TO PUT THE POINT concisely: "Basic Science" —that is, the critical improvement of our fundamental ideas about nature—is an activity that has flourished vigorously just twice in human history, each time for some four or five hundred years. The first great burst of critical speculation about Nature, in classical antiquity, lost its self-confidence and momentum at the turn of our era, in Alexandria. It did so in familiar-sounding circumstances. It did so at a stage when—firstly—the central philosophical and intellectual ambitions of science were abandoned as unattainable, and its enquiries fragmented into a dozen or more unrelated debates and bodies of technique; and when—secondly—the concern of the larger educated public with scientific ideas flagged and fell away, to be replaced by a preoccupation with Technology on the one hand, and with Oriental religions on the other. Science as we have come to think of it in the modern period revived only after a further twelve hundred years had passed, when Nicholas Copernicus (whose 500th birthday we celebrate this year[3]) at last challenged the scepticism of the Alexandrians, and reinstated the older intellectual claims of scientific inquiry, as originally asserted in Ionia and Athens.

Once before in human history the enterprise of natural science proved a fragile one, in a situation that was in some respects not unlike our own. Fragmented into a diversity of sub-sciences, confused in the public mind with technology and craft know-how, divorced from the broader questions of natural philosophy which had been the source of its original impulse and interest to educated men at large, the clear spring water of the scientific debate inaugurated in Ionia and Athens disappeared into the Egyptian sands.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, I can put forward a question which in another context might seem unintelligible. To anyone who is impressed by sheer quantity, it might seem a great paradox to question whether Science is really in a flourishing condition today. Surely the statistics put this matter beyond doubt? All those many, even unemployably many new Ph.D.s in science; all that money going into possibly valuable new inventions and techniques; all those voluminous and spasmodically interesting new scientific papers, journals, and specialities—surely they must count for something? Given the evidence of these figures, it would clearly be silly to deny that *something* is flourishing. The only question is, whether that "something" is Science as we have known it hitherto, or whether we have inadvertently traded in our inherited tradition of science for something slightly different. If that did prove to be the case (we must ask) have we made a good deal? Or should we be regretting what we have lost in parting with the older model?

Now, I'm not interested in posing as a Prophet of Doom. But I do think that it is worth somebody's while to underline the grounds for doubt and hesitation—the grounds for thinking that the state of science today may be more fragile than we normally assume—and to ask if there is anything further we should be attempting to do, or to understand, which might help us to avoid repeating the mistakes of the Hellenistic Alexandrians. Such grounds for doubt are not really all that hard to find. There is no need, after all, to underline the current alienation of many educated men from science—the growth not just of an indifferent, but of a positively hostile unconcern for the central topics and preoccupations of the natural sciences. Equally clear is the widespread confusion, both among the lay public and even among some scientists themselves, between the intellectual goals of scientific theory and the practical goals of the technologies. And, thirdly, we also find today a turning-away, within the

[3] In commemoration of this event, Macmillan have published a limited facsimile edition of the manuscript of *On the Revolution of the Heavenly Spheres* at £25.

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scientific profession itself, from the great unifying themes and issues of traditional natural philosophy, towards a more pluralistic, pragmatical view of the disciplines and sub-disciplines of science, which are seen as concerned with largely self-contained bodies of theory and experimental technique. Let me comment briefly on each of these three signs.

LET ME BEGIN WITH the reaction against science. It is tempting enough to ignore or dismiss the contemporary Anti-science movement, on the grounds that its rhetoric is confused and its denunciations hysterical. Or to be content with pointing out that its complaints simply echo misconceptions of science expressed far better long ago, by men like Montaigne and Jonathan Swift, Goethe and William Blake. The implication is that "Anti-science" is merely one more aspect of the same Romantic Syndrome that has recurred every 120 or 130 years for centuries—along with artistic mannerism, drugs, and long hair. But to do this would be to underrate the significance of the movement. For there is more to it, this time around, than a simple historical *ricorso* or cultural fad. Goethe and his contemporaries saw themselves as criticising only a certain style or method of doing science. They wanted to reform science, not abolish it. Now the attack has broadened into an onslaught on the whole of science. In earlier rounds, again, the dispute took place only within the world of artists and intellectuals. Now, it has acquired a sharp new social and political edge: scientists are being pilloried for lending, or even selling, themselves as accomplices to men of power and violence. Further, the passions that fuel the Anti-science movement have spread, possibly for the first time, into the professional world of science itself. I do not recall an earlier period when active research workers actually gave up doing science on moral or ideological grounds.[4] Finally: behind all the exaggerations and denunciations of the Anti-scientists, there are some uncomfortable facts to be faced. We do in fact often lay ourselves open to criticism, as scientists, for exaggerating the scope and reach of scientific understanding. We have not always thought hard or clearly enough about the moral choices implicit in our selection of research topics, or in the application of our results. And we have frequently blundered into relationships with government and industry about whose rationale and justification we remain unclear in our own minds. This being so, we should do better to admit that the Anti-science movement, though posing the issues of scientific self-awareness in a somewhat shallow and unsatisfactory manner, does nevertheless succeed in forcing them on our attention. And it does so in a form that makes it clear that these are practical, not just intellectual issues. The doubts they raise are not just questions for the speculative curiosity of historians, philosophers, and sociologists of science: rather, they are problems which affect the conduct of science itself. And they are not to be answered by merely retorting that the Anti-science movement is based on misconceptions about science—by insisting in reply, for instance, that the natural sciences are, in their own way, as imaginative and creative as the fine arts can be. Rather, these criticisms can be blunted only if we show that we, too, are ready to consider more profoundly than before what the broader social, cultural, and political affiliations of science have been, are and could be—and by bringing this new understanding to bear on the organisation and practice of the scientific life.

SO MUCH, FOR THE MOMENT, about the current alienation of some of our lay contemporaries. What is more discomforting is to recognise that the rest of the lay public—those who have *not* been alienated from science—too often continue to support it for reasons that are confused and irrelevant. A century ago, people still looked to science, first and foremost, for *enlightenment*. It was a source, not of physical comforts and conveniences, but of fresh ideas and insights. It challenged men's views about the world they lived in, its history and destiny, and about the significance of human beings in that world. It helped them, in Thomas Henry Huxley's admirable phrase, to understand, not just Nature but *Man's Place in Nature*. In a word, its interest to the lay public was not technological but cosmological, or even theological.

Something of this intellectual spirit is, of course, still active today. The widespread public curiosity about such fields as primatology, psycholinguistics, and neurophysiology once again reflects the implications those sciences evidently have for our understanding of Man's Place in Nature. In such areas as these for what we may call the *Scientific American* public, science remains the source of insight and enlightenment it was to our forefathers. Elsewhere, it is hard to be so sanguine. For most of the lay public, science and technology are barely dis-

[4] Even Socrates and Ptolemy justified their scepticism about cosmology on epistemological rather than moral grounds, arguing that astrophysical questions were intrinsically unanswerable by human minds. True: it is rumoured that Tartaglia gave up his work on the trajectories of projectiles because of its relevance to artillery, and so to war.

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tinguishable. Even those who see the difference between them apparently value science chiefly for its practical fruits—not for the intellectual light it throws on our world and our life, but as a stake in future technological progress.

This is not, of course, an attitude one can wholly quarrel with. When it comes to spending large sums of money—above all, large sums of public tax money—people are entitled to ask what they can hope for in return for their investment. The trouble begins when technological by-products come to be seen as the entire public justification of science. For then terms like "return" and "investment" too quickly take on a purely financial sense. The politics of science becomes transformed into an application of cost/benefit analysis. The economics of research and development comes to focus around the single question: "What incremental increase in material productivity, measured in monetary terms, can be expected as a consequence of any unit increase in expenditure on scientific research?" Once this has happened, it is hard to bring people's minds back to the primary fact that the Advancement of Science is something largely independent of the Advancement of Technology; that Science in its golden ages has not been (in the jargon of the government agencies) "mission-oriented" at all—or, at most, has been committed to a *philosophical* mission—and that we can expect little more direct monetary return from the building of a radio telescope than we could from the building of a palace or a cathedral.

In this respect, the fat years between 1950 and 1967 probably generated false expectations on both sides: both among scientists and in the lay public, including their elected representatives. Only seven years ago leading members of America's National Academy of Sciences could still hopefully estimate the natural and normal *rate of increase* in public support for basic science at 15% per year. In return, Congressmen were still content to defer calling in the implied technological *I.O.U.*s, previously issued by the scientists, and leave the supposed practical benefits of pure science to mature a while longer. Now that the fat years are over, we shall have to take what comfort we can from observing that many of the most significant advances in scientific understanding have been achieved without the benefit of any kind of research grant at all—by solitary, half-amateur workers in a Bohemian monastery or in a country house in Kent or in the Swiss Patent Office at Berne. After all, a generation that values technological spin-off far above enlightenment will probably end by leaving basic scientists to look after their own interests as best they can.

YET FOR MYSELF, I confess, I find neither the confusion of science with technology nor the alienation of the Anti-scientists as potentially damaging to the long-term "advancement" of science as the third and final sign of Alexandrianism; that is, the turning-away of scientists themselves from the grand unifying themes of traditional natural philosophy. I am not suggesting here that the broader intellectual questions that link the different sciences have been wholly forgotten. Any serious scientist is still ready to relax, after his day's work is done, and speculate about the nature of the human mind, or the possibility of life in other galaxies, or the boundaries of the entire universe. But for most of them this is no longer (so to say) a *part* of the day's work. The sheer quantitative growth in scientific work has brought with it a new specialisation and division of labour. As a result, few of the traditional questions of natural philosophy are still anybody's business. Every sub-branch and sub-discipline of science organises its research agenda around a highly specific and narrowly-defined set of problems of its own, and these separate agendas of research tend—for sociological reasons, apart from any others—to become increasingly self-sufficient.

To go further: it is not just that these grand philosophical themes are no longer anybody's proper business in science. Rather, it is that they are widely regarded as delusory, distracting, even *unscientific*. Professional division of labour between the special sciences has encouraged a widespread belief that only the special tasks of the special sciences are the legitimate concern of a scientist at all. In this way, the intellectual ambitions of scientists have narrowed themselves in the mid-20th century as clearly as they did in Alexandria in the early years of our era. The "scientific" thing for workers in each science to do (on this view) is to work at those limited problems to which their own special methods are adapted. Questions that are too vast or ill-defined to lend themselves to any such treatment can be set aside as "metaphysical", if not as "meaningless." So the positivism that grew up among the Vienna Circle philosophers in the 1920s has spread into natural science, and become an intellectual excuse for a self-limiting specialisation.

THIS HABIT OF MIND has unfortunate consequences of two kinds: both internal to science and for its external relations.

Within the sciences, it cuts men's minds off from one of the chief sources of worthwhile new questions. Again and again in the past, the really major steps forward in natural science have come when men *declined* to remain within the estab-

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lished limits and methods of any established discipline, and let their minds wander further afield. As has often been said, if Charles Darwin had learned to use the microscope in youth—if, that is, he had been initiated, or indoctrinated, into the established methods of contemporary physiology—he might never have got around to unravelling the origin of species. His very freedom from any commitment to a particular specialised discipline made it possible for him to attack the broader problems of speciation and evolution in the multi-disciplinary and philosophical way he did. In science as elsewhere, the division of labour is a marvellously efficient way to maximise the output of *standardised* products; yet, at the same time, it is a standing obstacle to real innovation. Technically speaking, the resources of *Drosophila* and *E. Coli* may be almost limitless; but, intellectually speaking, the exploitation of these resources eventually yields diminishing returns.[5]

Specialisation within the sciences only reinforces the feeling among laymen that the domain of the sciences is none of their concern. Newton, Darwin, and Freud dealt with topics that spoke to the layman as forcibly as they did to the specialist: the specialised scientist of today often has no more communication with the outsider than an Alban Berg or a Jackson Pollock. And this is not merely a pity for the layman. It is a source of harm to the sciences, too, since it cuts them off from their natural constituency: *i.e.* from all those more broadly educated laymen to whose philosophical interests science has been able to bring important insights in the past, and might still do for the future.

True, this tendency also is not entirely universal or absolute. In a few areas, notably that of the neuro-sciences, the last few years have seen a new emphasis on "interdisciplinary" research and discussion, and there have even been tentative moves in the direction of institutionalising this kind of interdisciplinary work. Yet, even here, the underlying motives have been mixed. Hitherto, the results of interdisciplinary research in the neuro-sciences have been barely more accessible to non-scientists than those of other, more specialised disciplines; and, in any case, it is not yet clear whether this new current away from pure specialisation represents a genuine turn of the tide, or only an eddy. Compared with the situation as recently as the 1920s, in fact, the

[5] So it is no wonder that the new army of younger molecular biochemists feels some bewilderment at seeing the innovative pioneers, whose techniques they have mastered so effectively, leaving the field and turning to brain physiology and cancer research and morphogenesis!

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overall state of natural science today is still highly fragmented. In several dozen distinct specialties, scientists apply and refine separate bodies of experimental and theoretical technique, while the larger questions that originally generated and linked their concerns have progressively dropped out of sight. We may not yet be at the Ptolemaic point of no return—the point at which (to give just one example) requests for some deeper explanation of the multiplicity of more-or-less "fundamental" entities in particle physics might be finally swept aside as delusory or beyond man's reach. But there have been moments over the last 40 years when we have come precious close to that point, and when all desires to press on beyond current theory to a still finer level of analysis have been condemned—if I may adopt Max Born's vivid phrase—as a concession to "the iridescent fancies of metaphysics."

SO MUCH FOR THE SIGNS and symptoms of Alexandrianism in the science of the present day. Let me now go back to the point from which I started, and pursue it further. We have all sorts of motives (I began by arguing) for wanting to achieve a new understanding of the interrelations between Science—particularly, the character and vigour of the science pursued in any culture—and the broader nature of the society within which it is carried on. The theoretical motives for exploring these interrelations more deeply are clear enough: they lie close to the heart of much of the most original work going on today in the history, philosophy, and sociology of the sciences. Yet these motives should also (as I shall now argue) be practical as well as theoretical. Out of sheer practical self-interest, scientists need to pay more attention to these interactions: need, that is, to be more self-aware than they have been up to now of the social and cultural milieu within which their work goes on. But who is there helping to make people—both scientists and laymen—more aware of the significance of these interrelations?

The *practical* importance of taking these questions seriously is, indeed, one of the few wholly new aspects of the present situation. For some 300 years, scientists paid lip-service to the social ideals of their founding prophet, Francis Bacon, while shaping their professional lives and careers on the model of that solitary genius, Isaac Newton. And, for some 300 years, this divergence between explicit ideals and actual practice did not matter. The advancement of science had not yet reached a point at which anything much could be done to realise Francis Bacon's dreams. The tree of knowledge was still growing, but it was not yet ready to bear a serious crop; so there was no more than lip-service to be paid to "the social function of science." Now, by contrast, the challenge of Bacon's work can no longer be ignored. For the first time in the mid-20th century, the practical by-products of three centuries of scientific research—in medicine, in agriculture, in technology—have suddenly become substantial and significant. That much alone is, of course, a truism. What needs to be added is this: that the institutions and professional habits of mind current among scientists have not yet caught up with this change. The community of science continues to approach this novel Baconian situation in the same posture, and with the same institutions, that it developed during the Newtonian era, when the natural sciences had only purely intellectual missions to pursue and, as a result, scientists had only themselves to answer to.

This fact at once gives rise to some difficult questions. Can scientists *afford* to go on operating in the same old way in this new situation? Or should we rather, for the health of science itself, be looking afresh at the whole network of institutions and connections through which the community of science interacts with the rest of society? Let me spell out a few of the particular forms that these general questions can take; I will just touch on three or four of these without elaborating.

1. We often speak—loosely—of working scientists as "professionals", or of science as one of the "professions", without reflecting particularly on the implications of our words. Until recently this manner of speaking was an innocent enough metaphor. In the new Baconian era, however, these implications cannot be escaped, and we should begin looking at them more closely. For there is one feature of any genuine, fully-fledged profession that scientists never have accepted, and show no signs of being prepared to accept now. In any formally-established "profession" (such as law or medicine) the practitioners of the art are granted the privileges needed for their work by legislative statute—that is to say, by a *political* act—and, in return, they accept certain reciprocal obligations to the general public who are affected by their professional activities. In consequence of this "professional" status, those activities are also subject to public supervision and regulation. Doctors of medicine can be deprived of their right to practice, or attorneys barred from appearing before the courts, if their work falls below an acceptable standard, or contravenes accepted codes of professional conduct. The administrative tribunals that enforce these penalties normally include representatives of the public as well as the profession—

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since it is, after all, the legal or medical interests of the *public* that are at risk in case of inadequate or unprofessional practice.

In claiming the status and rights of "professionals", do scientists fully understand what they are asking? Certainly, there is no sign that they are ready to acknowledge formal responsibilities to the general public for the quality and ethical character of their research. Still less, do they appear ready to accept statutory regulation of their work by an outside, lay tribunal. In true Newtonian spirit, they still think of "unprofessional" conduct as covering only offences against the intellectual standards of science—*e.g.* the faking of experiments—and so as something which can be policed entirely from within the profession of science itself. They have not yet come to terms with the Baconian demand that their scientific work should also be "in the public interest." For, if they were wholly clear-headed and honest in that regard, they would have to recognise one consequence: namely, that we can truly judge what the public interest is, only if we permit representatives of the public to join in the task of judging. Wherever the public interest is genuinely at stake, the price of professionalisation is public criticism and accountability; and this is a price that few scientists are yet ready to pay. Nor am I saying that they *should* necessarily pay this price. I am simply raising the question, and pointing out that the status of a "profession" may, on second thoughts, be more than the sciences should aspire to.

2. There is a parallel difficulty about the institutions through which the community of science deals with public affairs. These institutions—typically, the national academies into which the scientists of different countries organise themselves—are still recruited, almost exclusively, on a Newtonian basis: *i.e.* on the basis of proved distinction in scientific research alone. And for many of their representative Newtonian functions, these academies are clearly right to operate in that way. They can speak institutionally for the "best" science only if they comprise within themselves the "best" scientists. Yet, once again, the Baconian demands now being made on science change the nature of the problems facing our scientific institutions, and we need to be asking whether, in these respects, the public interest is best served by the existing Newtonian institutions. When it comes to estimating the social impact and significance of novel developments in science, for instance, will those same men, committees, organisations and officers still be the best spokesmen, and still have the soundest advice to give? Or do we need to fashion some

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new kinds of institutions and channels of communication between science, the public and the political estate, now that these Baconian issues have at last become as important as Francis Bacon himself prophesied?

3. Suppose we take up the viewpoint of citizens at large, or of the congressmen or parliamentarians whose task it is to deal with issues of social welfare and public policy in practice. The question can then be raised: "How are our legislatures and national assemblies to obtain—and have confidence in—the scientific advice they require in order to do their work effectively?" As things stand, the executive branch of government is in a specially favoured position—and this is true in all democracies, not just in the United States. The executive can always obtain the best available scientific advice when it needs it, while the people's elected representatives go short. At a time when issues of high policy are becoming increasingly technical in their implications, this difference helps only to increase the imbalance between executives and legislatures that is already a familiar feature of our times. So how can the legislative branch of a democratic government set about keeping up with the executive, when it comes to informing itself about the scientific and technical aspects of the policies that it is supposed to be monitoring or criticising?[6]

4. Finally, we may broaden the canvas still further. In this new Baconian era, what can the community of science do in order to keep the wider public sympathy and understanding that it needs for its support? Instead of "science" appearing as an arcane mystery into which laymen cannot penetrate, are there not ways in which laymen and scientists alike could develop a shared sense of participating in a common enterprise? Can we not convey to men who lack any formal scientific training the idea that the fundamental tasks of natural science are, nevertheless, ones in which *all* our interests are linked: that they have to do, in the last resort, with the need for a creative, rather than a formal "rationality" in human affairs—with the need, that is, to conduct our thoughts, our actions and our society alike in a critical, self-aware manner? And, if so, what channels exist, or could be created, through which this sort of community of scientists and non-scientists might be built up?

[6] Back in 1965, before the onset of the South-east Asian crisis, a start was being made on this problem in the United States. I refer to the discussions between Congressman Daddario's sub-committee of the House of Representatives and Professor George Kistiakowsky's National Academy Committee on Science and Public Policy. The questions posed then remain as urgent and unanswered today as they were when those discussions lapsed some half-dozen years ago.

I HAVE TOUCHED on all these questions without answering them, for two reasons. One is, that we are not yet in a position to give satisfactory answers to most of them, for lack of a more general understanding of the social and cultural interactions of science. The other is, that the beginning of wisdom here consists, in any case, in recognising the significance of the questions themselves, and so in beginning to take the political and social theory of science with the full seriousness it requires. Still, let me say something more constructive about my last group of questions: about how we might draw our fellow-citizens into feeling themselves directly involved with—even, part of—the enterprise and "advancement" of science. For it is on this level above all (I believe) that organizations dedicated to the "Advancement of Science" have something valuable and individual to offer.

Certainly, when William Whewell invented the term *scientist* for his British Association address in 1840, he did a great deal to shape the attitudes of his fellow-citizens towards the natural sciences. Initially (as I said) the effect of his invention was to focus attention on the value of organising scientific research and education, so that scientists generally could generate the same standards of craftsmanship and apprenticeship as artists had done hitherto. In this respect, the results of the subsequent 130 years have vindicated Whewell completely. During the last few decades, by contrast (as I have been arguing) the professional specialisation of science has at last begun to have more unhappy side-effects. Within the special sciences themselves, men have tended to become more self-isolated than they ever were before, and to lose their traditional sense of dealing with broad intellectual and practical issues, shared with all their fellow-citizens. Externally, laymen have come to see themselves as excluded from science, and to feel that their interests are in conflict with those of science and scientists. And it is at this point that any tendency to perpetuate the hard-and-fast division implicit in Whewell's argument, between "scientists" and "laymen", will in the future be liable to do more harm than good.

WHAT, THEN, DOES THIS CHANGE signify for such organisations of Scientists as the American Association for the Advancement of Science? What it calls for, chiefly, is a change of approach towards the Association's *audience*. In earlier days, the functions of the Association were predominantly educational ones—a matter of diffusing newly-discovered facts and ideas from the scientific élite to the larger public. The Association "advanced" the interests of Science by serving as a channel through which members of the public could make themselves the

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"pupils" of the scientists who spoke at its meetings. Now, however, the balance must surely begin to tilt the other way. Science nowadays has other urgent interests besides educational ones, and these new interests need to be "advanced" in quite other ways. Science needs, for instance, to rebuild its "constituency" among the public at large, at a time when its social reputation has been tarnished. This is something that can be done only if the scientists concerned set aside all sense of professional superiority—all sense of talking to the public *de haut en bas* from an elevated platform—and seek to draw a wider body of citizens into the discussion of scientific affairs on equal terms.

Notice, I say "into the discussion of *scientific affairs*", rather than "the discussion of *science*", for good reason. In the technicalities of the different natural sciences, laymen and professionals of course cannot discuss on equal terms; and, for so long as the Newtonian era lasted, it was natural for scientists to see themselves as the "teachers" and the public as their "pupils." But, now that we have Baconian problems to deal with also, the whole situation is transformed. All those questions that arise about the relevance of science and technology to "the public interest"—all those scientific issues that are comprised in the realm of political choice and social policy—come under the heading not of "natural science" proper so much as of "scientific affairs", and in this realm the division between scientists and non-scientists is irrelevant. There, we are all of us equal citizens, with an equal right to judge what is "in the public interest"; and, however technical the issues involved, we all of us have an equal right to be drawn into the resulting processes of deliberation and decision.

What is true on a practical level of "scientific affairs" is true also, on a more intellectual plane, of "natural philosophy." Public sympathy and understanding for science have been lost in part, as I have argued, because scientists nowadays address themselves so much less than used to be the case to intellectual questions having a clear, broader interest and significance. It is not just the relevance of science to social and political affairs that can stir the minds of sympathetic laymen. It is, also, the relevance of new scientific insights to longer-standing, larger-scale themes (Man's Place in Nature, and the rest) that can stimulate their intellects. And, here again, the specialisation of the particular natural sciences is no guarantee of their authority. On this plane, too, natural scientists of all kinds must be ready to sit down with one another, and with non-scientists, in order to talk over together in common terms the broader intellectual and moral implications of our newer scientific ideas.

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ROUTLEDGE

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ON BOTH THESE LEVELS, then—in the practical realm of "scientific affairs", as well as in the intellectual realm of ethical and philosophical issues—a community of interests between scientists and laymen is waiting to be developed, which could help restore the frayed threads linking the community of scientists to the rest of their fellow-citizens. And surely (we might argue) little could do more to promote the "advancement" of science, or to help us avoid the Alexandrian traps, than to take advantage of the opportunity to develop this community of interests. In this way, the lay public could be helped to achieve a better understanding, not just of detailed new scientific discoveries but also, more important, of the direct significance of scientific changes for their own lives and their own thoughts. Perhaps, indeed, if the threads had not been allowed to become so frayed—if scientists had acted earlier to encourage that feeling for the broader significance of science in the life and thought of our whole species that so many laymen have recently come to lack—the political and cultural situation of science might not, even now, have deteriorated as far as it has.

In our own decade, accordingly, one thing at any rate is becoming clear. From now on, the Advancement of Science is going to involve something more than educational tasks. We can all of us afford to sit down together—the scientifically-untrained along with the scientifically-expert—to discuss all those unanswered intellectual questions and unsolved practical problems on which will ultimately depend both the future impact of natural science on our society and culture, and also the future vigour and development of Science itself.

A Little Global Difficulty

Reflections on the Doomsday Debate—By JOHN NAUGHTON

ACADEMICS, like old men, are fond of pointing out that there is nothing new under the sun. When faced with an intractable problem, the reflex response of many of those who are paid to *know* is to "put things in their historical perspective." This strategy is not without its advantages. In the first place it saves one from having to explicitly admit defeat and run the accompanying risk of being declared redundant by society. Secondly it often carries with it the implication that if only one had more resources—more staff, a bigger computer, another particle accelerator or whatever—then one could crack the problem. And thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, it's a soothing way of sugaring the pill of defeat because it disparages the suggestion that there is any need for alarm. No matter how pressing or dangerous the problem, so the story goes, there is no need for panic because *we've been through it all before.*

It's not surprising, then, that laymen sometimes regard the invocation of the "historical perspective" as a species of intellectual con trick designed to get the academic off an intellectual hook.[1] Indeed, one suspects that many academics, particularly scientists, sympathise with such a view, even if they do not subscribe to it. Their attitude towards almost any attempt to cast current problems into an historical framework is analogous to the contempt with which, as P. B. Medawar pointed out recently,[2] many young scientists regard study of the history and philosophy of science. At worst, the implication is that such attempts are an activity suitable only for has-beens, a feather-bed to catch failing scientists or errant philosophers. At best the "historical perspective" is seen as a luxury which in these times of urgent problems and scarce resources we can well do without.

It does not need me to argue the wrong-headedness of such views, the opponents of which are more than capable of looking after themselves. All I wish to do here is to point out that these views seem to be widespread nowadays and that, in the case of two specific problems, they may have dangerous effects if allowed to go unchallenged.

THE FIRST OF THESE PROBLEMS concerns the increasing public hostility to science which we have seen in the last decade and the consequent crisis of confidence within large sections of the scientific community—a sort of collective menopause—which this hostility has engendered. Most of the reasons for this change are well known and have been discussed in a number of

[1] One wonders, for example, how an outsider would regard some recent issues of the journal *Economica* where economists, having failed to find any quantitative model of inflation to replace the famous "Phillips curve", have taken to squabbling about whether Phillips lifted the idea from someone else in the first place.

[2] *New Statesman*, 21 September 1973.

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books; there is no need to go into them here. There is, however, one reason for the present difficulties of science which has not enjoyed the attention it deserves: the fact that—despite the efforts of Polanyi, Medawar *et al.*—few laymen (or scientists for that matter) understand what science *is* and how its institutions actually work. Bernard Dixon, editor of the *New Scientist*, blames this omission on the sociologists who have in the past been markedly reluctant to examine the social and institutional backgrounds to scientific activity. His argument is that if books like J. R. Ravetz's *Scientific Knowledge and its Social Problems*[3] had been available a decade ago, we might not be in the mess we're in now.

> Now that the party really is over for scientists, there is a growing belief (separate from, but drawing additional fire from, the environmental damage wrought by science and technology) that science has over-sold itself, and understandable resentment that the scientific community has been allowed to grow up in our midst into an autonomous priesthood upon which the citizen has little or no influence. More open discussion of science, its internal conduct and external consequences, at an earlier stage would have helped to forestall this development.

In other words, the adoption of a wider or longer-term view of scientific activity may not be a luxury—as many scientists seem to think—but rather a vital factor in ensuring the survival and prosperity of science itself.

The second problem area where the adoption of some kind of historical perspective is important concerns the on-going debate about the environment. Here most of the running so far has been made by doom merchants touting various brands of apocalyptic holocaust. The prevailing tone adopted by the front-runners is urgent, poetical, frantic, cynical and despairing in turn, rather like the inside of an Italian tank during battle. A sample from Professor Paul Ehrlich:

> Most of the people who are going to die in the greatest cataclysm in the history of man have already been born. More than three and a half billion people already populate our moribund globe. . . .[4]

Ehrlich is nowadays the most famous of the leading environmentalists and it is perhaps not entirely coincidental that he appears to personify many of its most puzzling contradictions.[5] He holds a Chair at a reputable university (Stanford) and is therefore, one presumes, a rationalist by profession; yet he relies on emotion and his undeniable personal charisma to sway public meetings. In argument he spews out statistics with the rapidity of a machine-gun and the accuracy of a leaky blunderbuss. He brings to the eco-movement a fervour that can only be described as religious; his best-known book[6] is more reminiscent of a fundamentalist tract than of a contribution to a debate. Indeed one continually gets the impression from Ehrlich nowadays that he is no longer interested in any sort of meaningful debate. For him the question is not *whether* there will be an eco-catastrophe but rather *when* it will occur. He *knows* it's coming with the same blissful certitude with which the Rev. Ian Paisley *knows* there is a Just and Merciful God.

NOW IN DRAWING attention to Professor Ehrlich's messianic tendencies I do not of course wish to imply that this is the whole story either about him or about the environmental movement in general. It would clearly be absurd to categorise men like Barry Commoner or René Dubos as frustrated faith healers, and equally absurd to denounce all members of Friends of the Earth or the Conservation Society as fanatics. But it does seem to me that the doomsday debate has some religious undertones which are rarely, if ever, explicitly recognised.

Failure to recognise this religious dimension has had some serious consequences. For one thing it accounts for the almost total confusion of public attitudes towards environmental questions. The debate between Ehrlich, Commoner and *The Ecologist* on the one hand and Professor Wilfred Beckerman, Lord Ashby *et al.* on the other is presented by the mass media as a *scientific* argument where statistical "facts" are wielded like sabres. Since the statistics cited by both sides on many central questions (*e.g.* natural resources) appear to contradict one another, the layman is inevitably left with the impression of stalemate. And one cannot really blame him; what else can he possibly conclude on the knowledge available to him?

The truth of the matter is that the doomsday debate is almost as much about *beliefs* as it is about objective "facts." Only a fool or a knave would pretend that we know enough at present about the nature of global environmental problems to be really sure of anything.[7] The biosphere

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[3] *Scientific Knowledge and its Social Problems*. By J. R. RAVETZ. Oxford University Press, £5.

[4] *Ramparts*, September 1969.

[5] The most entertaining analysis of these contradictions to appear so far is Petr Beckmann's *Eco-Hysterics and the Technophobes*, The Golem Press (Boulder, Colorado). Unrepentantly irreverent and polemical in tone, it is nevertheless a very effective piece of work.

[6] *The Population Bomb*. Ballantine, 30p.

[7] See "The Ecological Tradition" by Kenneth Mellanby in *Nature in the Round*. Edited by NIGEL CALDER, Weidenfeld, £3.25. A sobering reminder of the extent of our ignorance is the fact that it is only comparatively recently that we have discovered what happens to the enormous quantities of carbon monoxide released into the atmosphere as a by-product of *natural* processes.

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which supports us is a network of unimaginably complex systems about which we still know virtually nothing. The data we have about these systems individually are sparse, unreliable and sometimes contradictory, and only a simpleton would claim to be able to extract a coherent and accurate overall view from the morass. By definition, then, any particular stance in the doomsday debate must be based on a *selection* from the mass of available information; each stance represents an attempt to impose an intellectual order on the chaos of reality. If this is the case, then the really important issue is not the analytical content of a particular ordering of reality, but rather the criteria on which the ordering was done in the first place. In other words, instead of asking *what* it is that Ehrlich or Beckerman believes, we should be asking *why* they believe as they do; one suspects that inside every protagonist in this debate (and inside every reader also) is a prejudice screaming to be confirmed.

THE LOGIC of this line of argument leads to the conclusion that the doomsday debate is grist to the mills of sociologists, psychologists and social anthropologists. So be it. In fact one noted practitioner of these arts, Professor Mary Douglas, has already thrown her hat into the ring with a splendid essay on "Environments at Risk", delivered at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1970.[8] As a social scientist, Professor Douglas has seen it all before:

> We are far from being the first civilisation to realise that our environment is at risk. Most tribal environments are held to be in danger in much the same way as ours. The dangers are naturally not identical. Here and now we are concerned with overpopulation. Often they are worried by underpopulation. But we pin the responsibility in quite the same way as they do. Always and everywhere it is human folly, hate and greed which puts the environment at risk. Unlike tribal society, we have the chance of self-awareness. Because we can set our own view in a general phenomenological perspective, just because we can compare our beliefs with theirs, we have an extra dimension of responsibility.

From this point of view she goes on to argue that

> Part of our current anxiety flows from loss of those very blinkering or filtering mechanisms which restrict perception of the sources of knowledge.

One of the merits of Professor Douglas' essay is its vivid reminder that the concept of environment is, to a greater or lesser extent, a cultural artefact. She has worked among tribes in the Congo—the Lele and the Bushong—who, although they were next-door neighbours, celebrated their cold and hot seasons at opposite points in the calendar. If concepts of environment can vary as radically as this, then concepts of pollution can too. In fact Professor Douglas argues that pollution is very largely a matter of social definition. The difference between us and the Lele, however unpalatable it may seem, is one of degree—no more. Of course our concepts are rooted more firmly in "objectivity" in the sense that they derive from what scientists tell us about the world, but there is no ultimate escape from the fact that what is pollution to Hampstead may well be a blessing indeed to Bermondsey.

The other service Professor Douglas provides is the introduction of an element of historical perspective into the doomsday debate by drawing some analogies between it and earlier controversies, notably the movement for the abolition of slavery.

> The abolitionists succeeded in revolutionising the image of man. In the same way, the ecology movement will succeed in changing the idea of nature. It will succeed in raising a tide of opinion that will put abuses of the environment under close surveillance. Strong sanctions against particular pollutions will come into force. It will succeed in these necessary changes for the same reason as the slavery abolition movement, partly because of its dedication and mostly because the time is ripe.

But consider the growth of classical economics as an analogy to the recent mushrooming of ecology as a discipline:

> A realisation which transfixed thoughtful minds in the eighteenth century and onwards was that the market is a system with its own immutable laws. . . . For the sake of that system and its unalterable laws, many good men have had to harden their hearts to the plight of paupers and unemployed. They were deeply convinced that much greater misery would befall if the system was not allowed to work out its due processes. In the same way the ecologists have perceived system. In fact their whole science consists in assuming system, reckoning inputs and outputs and assessing the factors making for equilibrium. . . . In exactly the same way as the old economists, the ecologists find themselves demanding a certain toll of human suffering in the name of the system which, if disturbed, will loose unimaginable misery on the human race.

Thus do contemporary ecologists, good liberals to a man, find themselves drawn into negative, even reactionary positions, just as Ricardo in his day, was drawn into deploring the effects of the Poor Laws.

This is not to claim that the debate about the environment is irrelevant or unimportant, or that we have nothing to worry about either in the long or the short term. Nor is it my intention to place

[8] *Ecology: The Shaping Enquiry*. Edited by JONATHAN BENTHALL. Longman, £3.95. See also Arthur Koestler's contribution to a subsequent ICA debate in *The Limits of Human Nature*. Edited by JONATHAN BENTHALL. Allen Lane, £4.

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more weight on historical analogies than they can bear. But what is essential is the need to stand back, to take a wider look at a debate which, however important it may be for the future of Man, has the property that it is universally confusing to men. This confusion seems to result from the fact that we regard the debate as a purely scientific one, rather than as a wider and deeper argument where scientific concepts are used as weapons, as means to a semi-religious end.

IT IS WORTH turning our attention to the way in which these scientific weapons are deployed in some particular area of the doomsday debate. Specifically, let us look at the use of computer techniques as exemplified by the *Limits to Growth* study.[9]

The chronology of this particular area of the debate will be familiar to most people, and can be summarised briefly. In March 1972 Professor Meadows and his colleagues at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology published their book describing simulations performed on a mathematical model of world society. The results of these simulations purported to show that we were headed for global eco-catastrophe in about 2020 A.D. unless we decided to mend our exponentially growing ways. Further, and more alarmingly, the authors went on to claim that the basic "overshoot and collapse" behaviour mode of their model was not significantly changed by virtually any feasible change in underlying assumptions or policies, and followed this up with a startling assertion:

> We feel that the model described here is already sufficiently developed to be of some use to decision-makers. Furthermore, the basic behaviour modes we have already observed in this model appear to be so fundamental and general that we do not expect our broad conclusions to be substantially altered by further revisions.

The book was a runaway success, selling well over half a million copies in Holland alone and God knows how many in the United States and elsewhere. By the summer of 1972, Meadows was, in a limited sense, a "world figure." The modest M.I.T. Assistant Professor was transformed in a few months into the confident adviser of governments. In Britain he was given an interview on *Late Night Line Up* and the rare privilege of a private "huddle" with the Science Research Council.[10]

Since those heady days nothing much has happened—at least so far as the general public is concerned. Meadows has gone to a tenured Chair at Dartmouth College, various academics in this country and elsewhere have tried out his modelling techniques, and the public has been left with a vague, but lasting, impression which is perhaps best summarised by the headline: COMPUTER PREDICTS CATASTROPHE.

There can be little doubt that, at least as far as the general public is concerned, the Meadows intervention in the doomsday debate has been outstandingly successful in winning people round to the apocalyptic point of view. I have myself been told by non-scientific friends that they found *The Limits to Growth* convincing because "computers have no axes to grind." (The same people, incidentally, do not hesitate to criticise other protagonists in the debate for their implicit bias. This distrust seems to be particularly aimed at economists like Professor Beckerman who are seen as having a vested interest in the price

[9] *The Limits to Growth*. By D. H. MEADOWS, D. L. MEADOWS, JORGEN RANDERS and WILLIAM W. BEHRENS III. Earth Island, £1.

[10] See J. Meade, "Limits of Models", *New Scientist*, 20 April 1972 for references to a discussion of *The Limits to Growth* at the U.S. Embassy, London, on 13 April 1972 in which Meadows addressed an influential slice of the British academic and political establishment.

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mechanism[11] which devalues their contributions.)

There is not much point in trying to analyse the absurdity of this kind of attitude. The fact is that such attitudes exist and they are important determinants of the way in which the public looks at the environment debate. Professor Meadows succeeded in his attempt to sway the debate because people were persuaded that his study was objective, scientific, and—since it involved the use of computers—likely to be more accurate than previous predictions of doom. Let us briefly examine each of these in turn.

Was it objective? Consider the following scenario: Meadows and his team were raised under the protective wing of Professor J. W. Forrester at M.I.T. Forrester is the inventor of the computer modelling technique (known as System Dynamics) which was used to construct the model on which *The Limits to Growth* was based. Forrester believes that his technique can be applied to any social system[12] and in 1970 he published a model of the world[13] which predicted global "overshoot and collapse" early in the 21st century.

By and large, Forrester's world model received scant public attention, with one or two notable exceptions. One of these was the Club of Rome, a mysterious collection of top dons, bureaucrats and industrialists who had already concluded that the world was coming to an end. The Club persuaded the Volkswagen Foundation to finance a research project to build an enlarged version of Forrester's model at M.I.T. The man who led that project was a committed young environmentalist named Dennis Meadows.

The Meadows model is larger than Forrester's, but in structure and concept it is essentially the same. And it produces very similar results to those generated by the original prototype. So we are driven to ask if *The Limits to Growth* was in fact the result of an "objective" study? Or was it purely an exercise in public relations, designed to give credibility to a foregone conclusion by playing on popular misconceptions about the power of computers?

SECONDLY, was it a scientific study? The answer obviously depends on what you understand by the term "scientific"; it is a pin-head on which I do not propose to dance at this time. But there is one very disturbing aspect of the *Limits to Growth* story and that is the fact that no detailed information about the underlying model was given in the original publication. And, what is more, the Technical Report containing this information has *still* not been published. In other words the scientific community has been denied the data necessary to make a critical examination of the assumptions and structure of the model—except at the whim of Professor Meadows.[14] This is a curious way for scientists to behave—especially in a controversial subject-area which they believe to be of earth-shattering importance. As Beckerman puts it:

> This is like my publishing a scientific book, showing that the world will soon come to an end on account of increasing instability of sub-atomic particles and mentioning, *en passant*, that in order to reach this result it was necessary for me to overcome the little problem of the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, but that I would not bore readers with the details of how I did this. If they were really interested they could read about it in a paper I presented to a conference of the Railwaymen's branch of the YMCA.

One does not have to go as far as this to find it distinctly odd that, apart from *The Limits to Growth*, the only publication to emerge from Meadows and his team so far is an innocuous collection of articles on garbage disposal, D.D.T. and other related topics.[15]

Finally, *are the Meadows predictions likely to be accurate*? From what I have seen of the crudity and naïvety of the model's assumptions, I doubt it very much. Note that I am not condemning the model itself for being crude and naïve; it is in the nature of these models that they are cheap and nasty compared with the complex social reality which they are designed to mimic. All I am saying is that we are obliged to be very sceptical when they tell us to expect global eco-catastrophe in 2020 A.D. To say this is simply to paraphrase the consensus of the scientific debate about *The Limits to Growth*. It is not an original or indeed even an interesting statement; but I have a feeling, from watching the media coverage of the debate, that it needs to be said.

IT ALL COMES BACK in the end to the need to take a wider view of the doomsday debate, to try to place the various protagonists in their proper

[11] And indeed he does. Professor Beckerman, however, also has a commitment to common sense—which is more than can be said for some of his critics. See his wickedly amusing Inaugural Lecture (*Oxford Economic Papers*, November 1972) for some of the reasons why he is so unpopular with the environmental movement. I have no reason to believe that his next book, *In Defence of Economic Growth*, to be published in 1974 by Jonathan Cape, will do much to increase his popularity among his critics.

[12] Two of Forrester's earlier books, *Industrial Dynamics* (1961) and *Urban Dynamics* (1969) describe models of a commercial firm and a city respectively.

[13] *World Dynamics*, Wright-Allen Press (Boston).

[14] Professor Meadows has made successive typescripts of the Technical Report available to a number of selected research groups around the world, notably the Fondacion Barriloche in Argentina and the Science Policy Research Unit at the University of Sussex.

[15] *Toward Global Equilibrium: Collected Papers*. Edited by D. L. MEADOWS and D. H. MEADOWS. Wright-Allen, £9.

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ideological and historical contexts. I have focused on one contribution to the debate which has a popular reputation for being objective, scientific and accurate and I've suggested that it may be none of these things. My feeling is that one could do the same with virtually any other contribution to the argument at the present time. If I'm right in thinking this, then we need to revise our thinking about the whole subject. And in particular we will have to stop regarding the debate as a scientific argument and treat it as a species of religious war where participants proceed, sometimes by inexorable logic, more often by other means, from basic beliefs to foregone conclusions.

The Soluble in Pawn to the Possible

Science and Politics—By ROGER WILLIAMS

CHARLES LAMB once wrote that in everything relating to science he was a whole encyclopaedia behind the rest of the world: today, so specialised are the sciences that it is taken for granted that even scientists may be out of touch with most of science. At the same time, recalling Robert Louis Stevenson's observation that politics is perhaps the only profession for which no preparation is thought necessary, one cannot escape noticing that directly or indirectly much of contemporary politics is concerned with or affected by matters of science. This becomes especially true if "science" is construed generously, that is, to include "technology" and "engineering", and to include also the social as well as the natural sciences. There is nothing either artificial or unusual about this usage, though for the sake of convenience the term "science and technology" is quite commonly abbreviated simply to "science."

That all is not well with the relationship between science and politics is a tenet of the current orthodoxy. But while nearly everyone may now be, like Lamb, almost equally ignorant of the internal substance of science taken as a whole, there can be no defence at the present time for failing to understand its external social ramifications. And while one may feel that in general Stevenson's implied censure of politicians is excessively harsh, there should be no doubt that politicians have mostly been ill-prepared to deal with the vast expansion and effect of science over the last thirty years. Science as a social, economic and political force has been the subject in one way or another of several recent books. In view of the critical importance of the theme it could hardly be the subject of too many.

As Sir Peter Medawar has pointed out, humanity owes it largely to science in the first place that it has come to see itself as having a potentially indefinite, and ultimately unimaginable, future.[1] Medawar himself believes in the general possibility of finding technological solutions for technological ills, and among the reasons for his conviction that science can be controlled more closely than is usually thought he notes that there tends to be a wide gap between demonstrating the feasibility of something and realising that feasibility in practice. He concedes that "we cannot point to a single definitive solution of any one of the problems that confront us" in the political, economic, social or moral domains, but his defence is persuasive: "We are still beginners, and for that reason may hope to improve." It is indeed part of man's conceit that he regards himself as having an extensive history, but while a week may well be a long time in politics, in evolution a thousand years is as a moment.

MEDAWAR'S FAITH lies in scientific rather than in political man. Dr Mendelssohn reposes his, if not in politicians, then in "the basic sanity of man." The decade after the Second World War may, he feels, have been "the time of greatest danger for mankind", nuclear war having during those years been a distinct possibility. But the development of the hydrogen bomb by the great powers rendered useless the traditional resort to war, so that war has now "ceased to be a total threat to highly developed forms of society", though it remains as a form of "ceremonial combat" in "carefully pre-selected" regions, where its spread is "almost clinically controlled by precisely measured doses of non-nuclear arms shipments." Eventually, the option of escalation having been effectively removed, Mendelssohn considers that even these localised conflicts will be abandoned, their glamour gone. In the light of events in the Middle and Far East in 1973 there is obviously much to be said for this prognosis.

But there are three major reservations which must be made. The first is that, as Robert

[1] *The Hope of Progress.* By P. B. MEDAWAR. Methuen, £2.00.

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McNamara has said, every future age of man will be a nuclear one. What this means is that a definite if decreasing probability of nuclear conflagration will remain until such time as a final, explicit and unbreakable peace is made between the major world powers. The implicit understanding which has obtained since the Cuban crisis, and *détente* itself are steps in the right direction, but they are very far from the end of the road.

Paradoxically, the second reservation is brought firmly to mind by Mendelssohn's own fascinating book, which is a study of the rise and fall of German science as well as a life of Walther Nernst.[2] It is naturally no part of Mendelssohn's task to explain the "enigma of modern Germany", but one reads his book profoundly grateful that, as he shows, the "mad fanaticism" of the Nazis blinded them, and blinded them completely, to the enormous scientific potential they had inherited in the laboratories of Weimar Germany. The greatest stroke of luck mankind has had this century was surely Hitler's total failure to appreciate either the inherent significance of science and technology or the remarkable scientific fertility of the Jews he allowed to escape from Germany. It might all have been so different. The contrast is striking even with the German government's attitude in the First World War. Then, while the employment of scientists in the war effort had not been part of the original plan, it was quickly seen that all hope of regaining the lost tactical initiative rested with science and technology, and, quite understandably, the scientists were found fully prepared to respond. The likelihood of one of the superpowers one day being led by a fanatic, or simply by a dangerously unbalanced individual, is no doubt very small, but it is not vanishingly small, and bearing in mind the first reservation, there may well still be a very long time in which things can go wrong.

The third reason for caution rather than complacency about the prospects for civilisation was clearly stated by Alvin Weinberg in a Ciba Foundation symposium of 1971.[3] The arrival of China as a (nuclear) superpower is imminent, and yet "So far no one has shown how a three-party, offensive confrontation can be stabilised." For the time being, the United States and the Soviet Union are, as Professor Klaus Knorr says in his *Power and Wealth*,[4] "in a class by themselves. . . . Both regard technical excellence and continuous technological innovation as central to their military strength." To both countries military research and development have become "crucial"; an "alarming rate" of technological obsolescence results; the selection of development options becomes a "very risky" process and it is taken as read that all choices will be "extremely expensive." Franklin Long, at one time Assistant Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, estimated in the Ciba symposium that in recent years some 40 per cent of the world's total research and development effort has been for military purposes; science, he suggests, has become a major driving force for all technology, "and notably so for military technology"; and at the same time "security" has been given a "military or quasi-military interpretation." The responses he proposes—more analysis, the assumption of a greater sense of social responsibility by scientists, more international but non-governmental contacts—are pretty unexceptionable, but always one must remember the enormous barriers any such proposals have to overcome: deep and genuine fears, and the indefensible but inescapable vested interests of politicians and military men the world over.

As Bernard Dixon underlines in *What is Science for?*,[5] in considering the socio-political aspect of science one can easily become swamped by the military dimension. But the many cases Dixon cites leave one in no doubt that there is also much amiss with the non-military side of the science and society relationship. Dixon does a convincing job of showing how more than most things science manages to be "all things to all men", from deadly genie to rescuing angel, from the purely utilitarian to the purely cultural. And his prescription for restoring a symbiosis between science and society is something one can only applaud. He would have those who work in defence research search their consciences so that so far as possible they may "resist seduction." Outside defence science he sees the best hope in educating the would-be scientist into "an awareness of the wider implications of his subject." He condemns the "neurotic degree of secrecy" which he feels hides the decision-making process throughout the world, and he looks for more public influence, though not communal control, over this process, especially as it applies to science. His eventual goal would be

[2] *The World of Walther Nernst: The Rise and Fall of German Science*. By K. Mendelssohn. Macmillan, £4.95.
[3] *Civilisation and Science: in Conflict or Collaboration?* Elsevier, £4.25.
[4] *Power and Wealth: The Political Economy of International Power*. By Klaus Knorr. Macmillan, £3.95.
[5] *What is Science For?* By Bernard Dixon. Collins, £2.50.

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> a gradual resolution of science into its two poles: the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, and the conquest of tangible practical problems. . . . At present these two motives are hopelessly confused—and that is the source of much of our contemporary disquiet.

The trouble with worthy objectives like these is obvious enough. Very many American scientists, say, would feel it was asking too much of them that they should forsake military research unless and until their Soviet counterparts did likewise. "Why," an industrial scientist in the civil sector might protest, "should I leave a lucrative position with a company about whose ethics I have doubts? What appointment could I get that did not entail ethical problems? And what of my responsibility to my family?" As regards less secrecy in decision-making, well, everyone wants openness and accountability to apply to everyone else, but few are prepared to set an example in their own affairs. Yet to dismiss Dixon's ideas without offering alternatives is to fall into the sterility of pessimism. That is the measure of the dilemma which science creates. One cannot afford to be optimistic, but one cannot afford to be pessimistic either.

DIXON IS ONE OF THOSE who thinks that there has been a striking plunge in the general opinion which is held of science. Non-scientists, he says, now view it with "uncertainty and suspicion", while scientists themselves are experiencing a "crisis of confidence and identity." It was also "an ill-defined but strongly felt malaise" about science which led to the Ciba symposium. In his contribution to that symposium Stephen Toulmin suggested that anti-scientific attitudes may have peaked about every 130 years, but this does not remove the conviction that the present situation is something quite new, because as Toulmin also says, "science is now a significant political factor in its own right." And in the words of another contributor to this symposium, Edward Shils, science has been attacked by anti-science "ultimately for its political connections." Even the politician at this gathering, Gerard Pelletier, who made the politically realistic remark that "power in a post-industrial society is exercised within such narrow margins that there is little room for manoeuvre", also confessed that he believed science and technology were "in the process of effecting profound changes in the conventional ground rules of politics."

The acute difficulty confronting thinking scientists has been dramatically summed up by Jean-Jacques Salomon.[6] He sees them "trapped by the forces they . . . unleashed through their

[6] *Science and Politics.* By JEAN-JACQUES SALOMON. Macmillan, £5.50.

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association with political power . . . torn between their obvious special responsibilities and their inability to discharge them by specific means." But in his opinion there is also an "army of technicians indifferent to the values which science challenges in its relations with the polity", and "it is the technicians who determine the decisions." It follows that his overall assessment is bleak: scientific rationality does not halt historical irrationality but rather adds to it; it is an illusion to suppose that science can solve problems which are essentially political; the ends of knowledge are "ideal", but the ends of power are "absurd", and the former are squarely subordinated to the latter.

IN DISCUSSING the "crisis" of science, it is essential to distinguish between the support of science for what may be regarded as socially undesirable ends, the concern for instance of Dixon and Salomon, and any attempt to interfere on political or ideological grounds with the technical methods and professional approach of scientists themselves. One may be able to see no end to the former situation, but as regards the latter it is unlikely that governments, at least in advanced industrial societies, will again seek to intervene in the natural sciences to the extent that the Soviet authorities once did. The ideological campaign affecting science was at its height in the Soviet Union between 1948 and 1953, but it began some twenty years before this and did not finally end in the field of genetics until 1965. The consequent effect on a wide range of sciences has now been carefully documented by Loren Graham; his book *Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union*[7] provides an enthralling insight into a phenomenon which it still seems strange should have occurred in the second half of the 20th century. Acknowledging that it is fashionable in the West to maintain that philosophy has nothing to do with science, Graham describes Soviet dialectical materialism as "an impressive intellectual achievement", and though admitting that it too is "not of immediate utilitarian value to scientists" he feels it may have "an important educational or heuristic value." As his study demonstrates, converted into dogma, dialectical materialism has more than once been a "serious hindrance" doing great harm to the development of science in the Soviet Union, but his hope remains for a synthesis of the Western and Soviet positions, with safeguards to ensure that the philosophical element is not exaggerated or made the subject of political manipulation as it so often was in the Soviet Union.

Curiously, as Graham explains, although it is the best-known example of intervention in the affairs of science by the political authorities, the Lysenko affair in the field of genetics was the least relevant to dialectical materialism in a philosophical sense. Only in this case and to some extent in that of resonance chemistry, where Graham represents Chelintsev as something of a would-be Lysenko, were there virtually no genuine intellectual issues somewhere embedded in the political pressures. Official backing was given to Lysenko's pseudoscience because the Soviet authorities desperately needed politically committed agricultural specialists. Lysenko was therefore seen as a "precious commodity", and Graham's perceptively exact conclusion is that

> no aspiring promoter of a peculiar scientific system ever fell into a more personally fortunate (and historically tragic) situation. The relationship between Lysenko and his environment was one of mutual corruption.

The tragedy was certainly of major proportions, in terms of scientists purged, science retarded, and agriculture grievously damaged. It was also a long one. Lysenko began his political climb in the early 'thirties, reached his apotheosis in 1948, was under heavy attack and seemed about to be officially castigated as the charlatan he was by 1956, and then "Astoundingly and seemingly inexplicably, this phoenix rose to blight Soviet biology for yet another eight years." Though Khrushchev quite evidently had much to do with it personally, this second climb is, as Graham says, even harder to understand, and certainly to excuse, than the first, for the Soviet Union was by this time a complex modern society apparently fully able to mobilise and utilise the extensive variety of scientists and specialists characteristic of such societies.

That the combination of dialectical materialism and a highly centralised political system has not always operated to the detriment of science is brought out by another of the cases which Graham examines, that of cybernetics. Many unanswered questions surround this "science" of rational control, and it seems that in the Soviet Union as in the West there is now disillusionment with it, at least as regards the practical possibilities it opens up. But of greater interest are the two earlier phases it passed through in the Soviet Union. Initially it met with hostility, and this was apparently mostly attributable to the general impact of Stalinism. But in the late 'fifties it was taken up with unprecedented enthusiasm, and Graham concludes that if the Soviet mixture of politics and ideology can harm some sciences, then it can also "catapult others to unusual

[7] *Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union*. By LOREN R. GRAHAM. Alfred A. Knopf, $15.00; Allen Lane, £7.

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prominence." Of course, in view of the current status of cybernetics internationally, it may be that the Soviet emphasis on it in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties was itself an over-reaction which, if it did no harm, did little good either.

COMMUNIST PARTY OFFICIALS have now indubitably learned that intervention in the natural sciences is an "exceedingly risky business", but in the area of the social sciences the threat of interference remains a real one. This is one important reason for trying to decide what precisely is meant by "the scientific method." Another, more relevant for the democracies, is brought out by Professor F. R. Jevons.[8] Referring to the "attempted or supposed transfer of method from the field of physical phenomena to social matters", he argues that "If our society comes to be run by technocrats according to allegedly 'scientific' methods, there is good reason to look more closely at the methodological recipe." Jevons's *Science Observed* is an instructive bird's-eye view of many of the key questions currently being asked about science. How can it be measured? What are its methods? What part is played in it by paradigms? What criteria should determine its development? What kind of people are scientists and how does the scientific community function? What contribution does science make to economic growth? Jevons comes down firmly on certain positions. In particular he sees applied science as a more noble pursuit than so-called "pure" science, so much so that he sees it as almost sinful for a scientist to take no interest in the social relevance of his work. And judging a well-informed public to be the best guarantee of the proper use of science and technology he defends good popularisation of science as an actual duty of the scientific community, so much so again that he describes the attempt to keep science "pure" by isolating it as "just plain anti-social."

As to the future, Jevons, not unlike Medawar and Mendlessohn, finds an attitude of "technological optimism" most reasonable. And in this context it is useful to be reminded, by Henry Holorenshaw in his introduction to a collection of essays in honour of Joseph Needham,[9] of Needham's conception of social progress: "essentially statistical" and dependent on a "calculus of aberrant observations", with acknowledged backslidings perhaps, but also a "continuous trend" to be depicted by a *rising* curve. These essays in fact provide a guide to the work which has been done, and the work which remains to do, in seeking to understand the historical connection between science and society. Thus Abdur Rahman in discussing 16th- and 17th-century science in India focuses on restrictions arising from inadequate institutional arrangements, while Roy Porter in examining the emergence of the science of geology stresses that science must be seen in the context of society but also warns of the dangers in expecting science to respond in any immediate way to social conditions. Robert Young in the same volume is concerned to stimulate a debate on the requirements of a radical historiography of science, and Jerome Ravetz enters a further plea for "critical science", to rescue science from what he sees as its current "dangerously bloated" condition of "moral crisis."

SO WHAT CONCLUSIONS may one draw about the contemporary relationship between science and politics? One might wish science to be exclusively at the service of society at large, and to some extent it is, but much more to the point is the fact that it is the mistress of power, both economic and military power. This is not

[8] *Science Observed: Science as a Social and Intellectual Activity*. By F. R. JEVONS. Allen and Unwin, £3.75.

[9] *Changing Perspectives in the History of Science: Essays in Honour of Joseph Needham*. Edited by MIKULÁŠ TEICH and ROBERT YOUNG. Heinemann, £6.50.

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really surprising, but neither is it necessarily a recipe for disaster. It is not surprising because almost the only politics the world knows is the politics of power, and almost the only economics the economics of competition. Politicians and businessmen are then compelled by the limitations of their circumstances to use whatever is to hand to further the goals of power and production, and science is both to hand and of proven strength. Some scientists may choose to opt out, and others may force a marginally greater concentration on more socially valuable science, but the goals of power and production will continue to be served until the political and economic organisation of the world has been completely transformed. Nothing in current science or in current politics suggests that such a transformation is remotely in sight. For the present, while one may regret that the ends which science is so often caused to serve are either wasteful of resources or perilous to mankind, all may yet come right, provided only, as Arnold Toynbee has put it, that the human race simply allows itself to stay alive. One can end no more fittingly than with that remark, unless it be by amending some words of Seely, because if, as he said, history is past politics, of this one can be sure, that science is future politics.

Revolution in the Heavens

Explorations of the Universe—By JOHN TAYLOR

A REVOLUTION appears to be under way in our understanding of the universe brought about by new ways of looking at and thinking about the heavenly bodies. A whole new range of instruments—radio-telescopes, X-ray and infra-red detectors flown on rockets and orbiting satellites, gravity wave detectors—has enormously extended the range of observations outside the optical spectrum. In combination with ever more precise optical observations achieved by delicate new techniques, they have shown the basic objects of the Universe to be far more complicated than could have been imagined several decades ago. "New" heavenly bodies—pulsars, quasars, radio galaxies, infra-red and variable X-ray stars—give rise to additional enormously difficult questions of explanation.

This information explosion on the heavens has occurred alongside a resurgence in ideas which attempt to describe the Universe in as unified a fashion as possible. The explication of processes occurring in the formation and evolution of stars and interstellar space leans heavily on modern atomic physics, while the nature of the sub-nuclear particles is turning out to be highly relevant to the very early stages of the Universe or the late stages of the collapse of a massive star. Even more important are the recent attempts to combine quantum and gravity theory in a consistent fashion, so as to be applicable to such highly condensed states of matter. It may well be that gravity theory will have to be somewhat modified to achieve such a synthesis, and in the process allow a complete unification of all the fundamental forces of nature.

This all points to the signs of an imminent breakthrough in our understanding of the Universe. With so much at stake and with such a great amount of activity of both an experimental and a theoretical nature it is encouraging to know that there are enough authors around publishing books to enable a reasonably conscientious reader to keep abreast of it all. This may require a certain amount of hard work on the reader's part, but areas of greatest research activity can be notoriously difficult to explain simply. In any case the most precise language of explanation is that couched in mathematical terms; those interested in the subject should be prepared to try to understand the beauty of the Universe expressed at least a little in such a language.

THE FIRST PROBLEM in approaching this field of astronomy and cosmology is to have a sufficiently broad framework within which to understand it. An appreciation of Newton's theory of mechanics, of Einstein's theory of gravitation and its stellar and cosmological implications, of the physics of stars and galaxies, at least at Newtonian level, and some inkling of radiation, both electromagnetic and gravitational, are almost a *sine qua non*. There are unhappily too few books which contain a satisfactory discussion of such topics.

Gravitation and Cosmology by Steven Weinberg[1] and *Gravitation* by the triumvirate of Charles Misner, Kip Thorne and John Wheeler[2]

[1] *Gravitation and Cosmology: Principles and Applications of the General Theory of Relativity*. By STEVEN WEINBERG. John Wiley & Sons, $19.95, £9.

[2] *Gravitation*. By CHARLES W. MISNER, KIP S. THORNE and JOHN ARCHIBALD WHEELER. W. H. Freeman, $39.50, paper $19.95; £19.20, paper £8.60.

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go a long way to filling this gap. Both are written by undoubted experts and have been tried out under fire, so to say, being based on lectures to students at various American universities. The former covers the physical aspects of gravity and cosmology more closely than the latter, and has a more complete discussion of tests of general relativity, of gravitational radiation, stellar processes, cosmological models and the early evolution of the Universe. This is all clearly and concisely written, and makes an admirable text for appreciating the physical bases of modern astronomical theory.

After establishing briefly that the cosmos is a space-time manifold, *Gravitation* describes the geometrical Universe. There the emphasis is less on the physical facts and whether or not they agree with the theories; it is more on the powerful techniques of geometry which permit various physical problems to be solved at a general level. This allows some considerable exploration of the phenomena of gravitational collapse and the ensuing formation of black holes.

IN A SENSE these two books are complementary, the first approaching the problems from the viewpoint of a particle physicist and the second from that of a classical relativist. They will undoubtedly be of general value, but have particular interest for those who wish to build a sure foundation for themselves in this field, especially aspiring research students.

These books are written in the traditional style, without any feeling of personality involvement or of the true heat of the furnace in which ideas are forged, to be brought out red-hot and hissing into the misty air. Sir Bernard Lovell compensates for this lack in *Out of the Zenith*,[3] a very personal account of the political intrigues and machinations needed to create large radio-telescopes and keep them in operation. It also has a useful discussion of the various crucial advances aided by the work of his group at Jodrell Bank, especially that of quasars and pulsars.

The story of quasars has still not been completed today, in spite of many attempts over the past decade. The early part of that investigation shows the difficulty still with us—how objects can be at great distances and yet emit far more energy than the average galaxy. Furthermore the size of the emitting objects is remarkably small—hence their initial appellation of quasi-stellar sources (now shortened to quasars) since they looked so much like stars.

THE ATTEMPTS by various observatories throughout the world to determine the size of these objects make a very remarkable story, and it is told quite fully—the phone calls, letters and telegrams, the sending of a personal assistant to Russia to pave the way for international collaboration, the attempts to obtain money for a further radio-telescope which would do the job better. All this is played against a backdrop suffused with the insistent urge to be first to make the discovery of the quasars' size, an urge which drives some scientists relentlessly on to understand the Universe around them, just as it propels mountaineers to be the first to scale the highest peaks and racing drivers to risk their lives to be first over the finishing line.

For those with little mathematical inclination the puzzles of quasars, and a possible clue to their solution, are beautifully described by Sir Fred Hoyle.[4] He presents recent photographic evidence that there may be two sorts of quasars, one very distant and still perplexing as to its source of energy, the other much closer to home, so less of a paradox. This is all tied in with an approach to the Universe in which the strength of gravity is decreasing with time, an idea also discussed by Weinberg.

This idea is a very appealing one. There are four fundamental forces in the Universe, electromagnetism, radioactivity, the strong force between the sub-nuclear particles holding them together in the nucleus, and last (and very much the least) that of gravity. Gravity is the weakest force known, fantastically weaker than the other three—the force of gravity between two electrons being smaller than their electrical repulsion when the same distance apart by a factor of one followed by forty-three zeros—and it is only when large bodies such as the earth or the sun are considered that gravity becomes a force of any importance.

It has so far proved impossible to explain such a small number as the ratio of the strength of gravity to that of electricity, yet this is one of the most crucial problems at the very heart of phyicss One way around it, originally suggested by P. A. M. Dirac, is that gravity is now very weak because the Universe is very old; when it was younger gravity was much stronger, even up to the level of the other three fundamental forces of nature. There is very interesting evidence that such a change in gravity might have occurred over geological times, with the earth closer to a hotter sun a billion years ago. That we ourselves have evolved at all, however, appears to preclude the possibility that gravity has ever been as strong as the other forces of nature; if that had been so, all water on earth would have boiled away at the crucial early stage of evolution.

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[3] *Out of the Zenith*. By BERNARD LOVELL. Oxford University Press, £5.50.

[4] *From Stonehenge to Modern Cosmology*. By FRED HOYLE. W. H. Freeman, $4.95, £2.10.

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But a moderate increase of gravity as we go deeper into the past could well be allowed.

A conjecture of this sort has been built into a serious theory by R. Dicke and has great relevance to the problems of stellar evolution and of cosmology. It gives a theoretical structure which can agree almost completely with Einstein's general theory of gravity if so desired, but can deviate from it considerably if that is also necessary. At present the tests of Einstein's theory—the advance of perihelion of Mercury, the delay of radar echoes from Venus, and the deflection of light by the sun—are in good agreement with Einstein's theory of gravity, but do not exclude Dicke's modification of it. In other words we do not yet have a unique theory of gravity.

Nor is the situation clearer as far as cosmological models are concerned. There are the two great rivals, the big bang theory and that of continuous creation. The latter, powerfully advocated by Hoyle in the past and still having his support, founders somewhat on the background electromagnetic radiation discovered accidentally in the sky at the Bell Telephone laboratories in 1964 and 1965. This appears to be coming uniformly in all directions and is one hundred times greater than expected from known radio sources. Its nature is described thoroughly by Weinberg, and also by Lovell in a useful general chapter on ideas in cosmology (which might helpfully have been put at the beginning of the book so as to set the scene more clearly).

The only satisfactory explanation of this universal radiation is that it is the relic of the light bathing the cosmos when it was much smaller and hotter. Since then matter and light have had less effect on each other, the light subsequently cooling off to its present low temperature of just under three degrees absolute. Hoyle argues that such reasoning is not justified; the background radiation may come from very distant sources which we don't know about. Yet he doesn't explain at all why the light has such a temperature, whereas this can be somewhat understood on the "big bang" idea that the whole Universe started out as a big glob of highly condensed matter which suddenly exploded.

There are other observable effects which differentiate between the two cosmological theories, such as the variations of the apparent sizes of objects with their distance from us, or the numbers of radio sources in the sky farther than a certain distance from us. These are discussed carefully by Lovell and by Weinberg, both of whom conclude that it is not possible to determine which theory should prevail. Indeed the different data seem to contradict each other, one set indicating a deceleration of receding galaxies with their ultimate coalescence, another requiring the Universe to expand indefinitely.

NATURALLY ENOUGH all of this work depends heavily on the actual observations, so that one must have them at hand to appreciate what is involved. This is where C. W. Allen's *Astrophysical Quantities*[5] proves invaluable. It is divided basically into three distinct parts, containing atomic, solar and stellar, and galactic properties respectively. Each part is extremely comprehensive, so that if it is necessary to look up how rapidly radiation is absorbed by stellar interiors, what spectral lines will be emitted by what atoms, what the atmospheres are on what planets, or the nature of the nearer stars, then this is the place to go. The important heavenly constants are presented in a rather condensed fashion in places but a great deal of extremely useful information is included. It is in these data that some of the clues to the heavens lie.

A particular case in point is that of the pulsars and X-ray stars, both tabulated in Allen's book. The story of the discovery of pulsars by Tony Hewish and his colleagues in 1967 is neatly told by Lovell, especially how the variable radio signals received from them were suspected of being from an object the size of a planet, and had to be investigated very carefully to see if this variability was a code and the signals therefore of extraterrestrial origin. As Lovell writes:

> Little imagination is required to conceive of the tumult which would have arisen if the information had been released at that stage. A gullible world would have seized on the extraterrestrial civilisation concept and a scientific discovery of enormous fundamental importance would have been submerged in a torrent of science fictional nonsense. It is also quite certain that the scientific work of the Cambridge group would have been stopped for a long period by the inundation which seems to be associated with "newsworthy" scientific items in our age.

[5] *Astrophysical Quantities*, 3rd edition. By C. W. ALLEN. Athlone Press, £6.25.

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It must have been very hard indeed for Hewish and his students to keep to themselves this unfolding drama. That they did so until they were able to produce the incontrovertible scientific evidence that the objects were amongst the stars, that there was no coding, and that the energies involved were those to be associated with natural phenomena, is to their very great credit and in the highest tradition of scientific research.

Although the pulsars have not proved quite as exciting as all that, yet they are objects of the greatest scientific interest, the two general books on gravity pointing out their remarkable properties, especially that of the very high density needed to obtain such rapidly fluctuating signals as are observed. It is here that our understanding of gravity can be developed, for it is only in highly condensed matter that gravity can increase its strength. The centre of a neutron star, with densities calculated to be well over a hundred million million times that of water, is evidently a very suitable laboratory for such investigations; the observations described by Lovell, especially that of the infrequent speeding-up of the emitted pulses give very valuable indications of internal behaviour. Precisely why they occur is, however, still not known.

AN EVEN BETTER PLACE to test gravity, the binding force of the Universe, is in even more highly compressed matter. Such a situation has been conjectured to arise when a star at least twice as heavy as the sun has used up all its nuclear fuel and so has no internal source of heat, and so of pressure, to prevent it from collapsing in on itself. If the star is lighter than this it can settle down to a tranquil old age either as a white dwarf, about the size of the earth but a million times more dense, or as a neutron star several miles across, with the great density mentioned earlier (blowing off its outer surface in the process as a spectacular super-nova).

A star with too much mass to become either a white dwarf or neutron star collapses ever more in on itself. As it does so the gravitational attraction on its surface increases, and so does its escape velocity. Ultimately one will have to travel faster than light to escape from the surface of the collapsing star. Since that is impossible, as far as we understand it, from then on all objects, including light itself, would be trapped behind a spherical surface called the event horizon. The collapsed star is appropriately called a black hole since any light shone at it will be trapped and never be reflected.

Black holes evidently have a bizarre and rather dangerous character. Naturally they are of extreme interest since in them gravity may be tested to the extreme; the matter at the centre of the black hole is compressed to a point and ultimately vanishes. In other words, the laws of physics, as well as the space and time associated with the matter, are annihilated at the centre of the collapsed star.

Such objects, if they exist, evidently cause science a great deal of trouble. The challenges they present are discussed at some length by John Wheeler and his colleagues in *Gravitation*, appropriately so since he has described this situation so forcefully over numbers of years. A book devoted to them in its entirety has just appeared—a collection of lectures delivered on black holes at a summer school held last year.[6] Except for the one experimental article on the observations of variable X-ray sources, where black holes are being looked for, the theoretical level of the lectures is very high and could only be properly appreciated by those who have already come to grips with one or other of the first two books under review. But undoubtedly such study is worth while to enter an understanding of black hole physics; it is through them that a better grasp of gravity will be obtained.

A further book on the same level is that by

[6] *Black Holes*. Edited by CECILE DEWITT and BRYCE S. DEWITT. Gordon & Breach, £13.50.

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But a moderate increase of gravity as we go deeper into the past could well be allowed.

Hawking and Ellis,[7] who discuss the general problem of space and time distortion by given distributions of matter, concluding with a chapter on black holes and one on gravitational singularities. These latter are places where the force of gravity becomes infinite; they are the true testing places of gravity. The techniques used in the discussion are those of differential geometry, and the argument throughout has a certain beauty. Yet this beauty can only be skin deep; the theory destroys itself by the apparently inevitable creation of black holes.

OUR UNDERSTANDING of the Universe about us is going on apace; the present activity is well represented by these books and it would seem to indicate some sort of breakthrough in the near future. But we may only just be beginning to travel a long road of understanding of the Universe. The historical perspective is well exemplified by the first part of Hoyle's book; if Stonehenge is an eclipse calculator, as he conjectures, we have still travelled a long way in understanding the heavens in the last four thousand years. How much further might we not travel in the next four million years? And what about other civilisations on other planets elsewhere in the Universe?

We have no evidence for the existence of such societies. The flurry about pulsars which I mentioned earlier shows that scientists are not immune to the hope that they do exist, and may even be communicating with us. There have been numerous reports of scientific investigations into UFOs, the objects which may be of extraterrestrial origin carrying intelligent beings on board. A very good discussion of the present situation on these matters is the report on the symposium on UFOs held in 1969 in Boston, edited by Carl Sagan and Thornton Page,[8] with their additional comments. These are most valuable since the various papers at the symposium, all highly readable, lead to no definite conclusion either way. It is certain that there are UFOs, but there is no consensus at all as to their origin.

We cannot expect to have help from across the stars to solve the problems facing us of how to understand the Universe. We must tackle these on our own and the books under review show that we are standing up to the challenge quite well.

[7] *The Large-Scale Structure of Space-Time.* By S. W. HAWKING and G. F. R. ELLIS. Cambridge University Press, $28.50, £10.

[8] *UFO's: A Scientific Debate.* Edited by C. SAGAN and T. PAGE. Cornell University Press, $12.50, £5.65.

Embarkation

Something today evokes (it may just be
the smell the grass makes stewing in the heat,
the sun illuminating crevices
I had not dreamed all winter still existed,
or possibly that undefined misgiving
I felt then and feel always underneath
the merely surface-pleasure summer brings—
a sense of somehow growing over-ripe)
a summer ending and a country halt.

Those in the sulphurous carriage were the same
as those who go unknown to business daily,
walk always clockwise aimless round the deck
until the plank is lowered and they file
into that city, on the other side,
of smoke and pimpled dummies and debris.
Odysseuses bound daily to commute
with rolled umbrella, brief case and dark suit.
And I have been among them on the quay,
placed pennies, at the turnstile, on our tongues.
I joined the train of lobster-pink old age.
Weeds prised the platform, where you waved, oblique.
The day was hot and stewed grass filled our lungs.

Peter Reading

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

Lytton Strachey & the Facts

By Donald H. Simpson

LYTTON STRACHEY'S *Eminent Victorians* was published in 1918 and widely praised; it also evoked some strong hostility. Three years later he portrayed the pre-eminent Victorian, the Queen herself, and this received even more general acclaim. In the half century since, Strachey's biographical achievements, merits and shortcomings, have been extensively analysed and discussed. The appearance in *The Times* of 15 January 1972 of Strachey's short and hitherto unpublished appraisal of H. H. Asquith provoked considerable correspondence, not only on the accuracy of this particular essay, but on Strachey's standing as a historian. A distinguished lawyer and biographer, H. Montgomery Hyde, asserted

> "the facts remain that—as he was the first to bring out—Manning *was* a worldy prelate, Arnold *was* a harsh and muddleheaded headmaster, Florence Nightingale *was* a bad-tempered nursing reformer, and General Gordon *was* an eccentric with an addiction to the bottle. Strachey's comments are never unfair, because they are invariably based on facts which are accurate."

One's opinions of the Eminent Victorians themselves must in the last resort be subjective, but, surely Strachey's use of facts can be scrutinised objectively.

The roots of *Eminent Victorians* lay deep in Strachey's background and experience. Born in 1880, of a family with a long tradition of public service in the Empire, he grew up in Queen Victoria's reign, and though he later reacted violently against many of the accepted values of the period, the comparatively mellow light that falls on the latter part of *Queen Victoria* is perhaps a reflection of the background of his first twenty years. For a time he attended Abbotsholme School, whose headmaster was Dr Cecil Reddie, and his experience there provoked the resentment of the public school tradition which he later expressed in "Dr. Arnold." By the time he went to Cambridge he had discarded any Christian beliefs, and became a leader in the anti-religious element, with its air of "brash, pornographic pessimism." In the opinion of his biographer, Michael Holroyd, his complex emotional development produced a "poison of accumulating resentment which was to find its most powerful and successful outlet in *Eminent Victorians*."[1]

The literary origins of *Eminent Victorians* arose in part from his work as a reviewer for *The Spectator*, edited by his cousin St Loe Strachey, from 1904 onwards. He acquired a distaste for hagiographical and ill-constructed biographies—works compiled by writers on what Boswell's biographer, F. A. Pottle, has called "the simple procedure of sorting their files of notes into chronological sequence and hurling them at the printer." Strachey also developed a capacity for writing brief biographical and literary essays—and in one of them, on Voltaire, he introduced a quotation apparently from that author but actually invented by his sister Marjorie! His own historical sympathies were with the 18th century, whose urbane cynicism and polished style, exemplified in writers like Gibbon and Horace Walpole, were more to his taste than the moral earnestness of the Victorians.

In the autumn of 1912 he was considering writing a book to be called *Victorian Silhouettes*, containing twelve biographical essays. The scientists among the subjects were to be admired and the non-scientists to be exposed. His tentative list of names included the four who eventually became the *Eminent Victorians*—Cardinal Manning, Florence Nightingale, Dr Arnold, and General Gordon. He began his research on Manning during that year, but the eventual scale of this essay made him realise that the original plan was no longer practical, and the four biographies he eventually wrote were all hostile. He continued his research and writing at The Lacket, near Marlborough, during the early years of the war, and completed the last essay, on Gordon, in London during September 1917. Even at a late stage, he considered adding one or two more essays, but he made his final revision of the four at the end of 1917. The friends he showed it to were enthusiastic. One of them, Virginia Woolf, later wrote:

> "To recreate them, to show them as they really were, was a task that called for gifts analogous to the poet's or the novelist's, yet did not ask that inventive power in which he found himself lacking."

[1] Michael Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: A Critical Biography*, 2 vols., 1967–68, is, unless otherwise stated, the source for biographical details in this article. It is a most important study both for Strachey himself and for his literary and artistic *milieu*, and its assessment of *Eminent Victorians* summarises most of the published and unpublished criticisms. It is however tempting to speculate what a hostile biographer might achieve by selective use of the material in its scrupulously frank pages.

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The book was enthusiastically accepted by Chatto & Windus, and published in 1918.

STRACHEY REGARDED HIS ESSAYS as variations on a theme—Manning, *allegro vivace;* Florence Nightingale, *andante;* Arnold, *scherzo;* and Gordon, *rondo*. Holroyd summed up the common theme as "one dominating quality—a sense of ambition, inflated beyond reason by religious superstition" and Strachey's considerable gifts were devoted to conveying this.

Strachey wrote with great artistry, producing a volume that was compellingly readable, often very amusing, but, over all, negative in purpose and impact. His method involved a presentation based on one dominating characteristic in the subject, supported by carefully selected evidence. There were various means to this end.

Firstly, the achievements of the Eminent Victorians were built up beyond even the claims of their admirers so that the contrast with the feet of clay that were to be revealed would be all the greater. Florence Nightingale, for example, was credited with excessive achievements in purveying the hospitals and reforming nursing methods during the Crimean War. Gordon's leadership of the "Ever-Victorious Army" was depicted as the transformation of "an ill-disciplined, ill-organised body" into an almost magically conquering one whereas it had already achieved considerable success before he assumed command.

All four of the subjects had strong religious convictions. Strachey's approach to these was phrased in an atmosphere of flippancy "where nothing needs to be proved since everything depends on the proof being taken for granted,"[2] *e.g.* "The years that followed showed to what extent it was safe to depend upon St Peter." Since religious doubts and problems were irrelevant to Strachey's thinking, he was unable to realise that Arnold's theological difficulties about certain Christian doctrines or Manning's reaction to the Gorham judgment could be taken seriously.

An air of bathos was conveyed by mixing serious ideas with irrelevant factors. Names provided one opening. "St Guthlake, Brother Drithelm, St Amphibalus, St Wulstan and Cunibert the Hermit" are part of a list in a paragraph aimed at building up the picture of Newman as a credulous and somewhat ridiculous simpleton. Names such as Wegg-Prosser, Gell, Burbidge, Walrond and Simpkinson were inserted for no valid reason save a certain comic implication. Strachey was even more given to introducing physical defects and mannerisms—Gordon (on the doubtful authority of Chaillé-Long) was described as "tripping," Clough as "This earnest adolescent, with the weak ankles and the solemn face," and Arnold, whose "outward appearance was the index of his inward character", had legs "shorter than they should have been." Even if these were correct, Strachey knew as well as his readers that comic names and physical shortcomings did not in themselves invalidate ideas or actions; but the skill of the writing is such that the impression of absurdity is conveyed. Occasionally this device misfired. Manning's sermon on Faith was "fiercely attacked by no less a person than the celebrated Mr Bowdler." The only celebrated Mr Bowdler was Thomas, the expurgator of Shakespeare—with whom, one may surmise, Strachey felt less than total sympathy—but he died in 1825! The opponent of the Tractarians was his nephew, Thomas the younger.

THE IMPRESSION of the narrative is strengthened by the use of adjectives. "Cardinal Manning" abounds in hints of intrigue—Manning went "up the little winding staircase in the Vatican and through the humble door" to visit Monsignor Talbot. Later in the same paragraph, "the winding stair" is repeated, followed by "the low-arched door."

Strachey referred in his preface to lowering a little bucket into the great ocean of material to "bring up to the light of day some characteristic specimen." His was no random fishing; he directed a keen light of purpose into the ocean depths and selected what was not necessarily characteristic but what might, by suitable presentation, support his thesis. André Maurois called this the

> "juxtaposition of incongruous and discordant facts. An amusing process, but one that belongs to the technique of the pamphleteer rather than to that of the historian."[3]

Analyses of this practice must inevitably deal with details and can therefore seem trivial, but when so much of Strachey's effect depended on the manipulation of fragments of information and dialogue, an assessment of the general picture drawn from them must depend to some extent on such specific study.[4]

In handling such material, Strachey used a degree of emphasis to highlight certain aspects of character, while omitting or passing rapidly over those facts which did not accord with his view of the individual concerned. Arnold was a great lover of the peace of the countryside, but this was minimised by Strachey since it clashed with the image of a restless, narrow-minded busybody. Florence Nightingale took a personal interest in

[2] A. E. Dyson, "The Technique of Debunking" in *Twentieth Century* (1955), p. 245.
[3] A. Maurois, "The Ethics of Biography" in *English Institute Annual, 1942.*

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nurses under training throughout a long period of her later life, but human sympathies would mar the picture of a pitiless "tigress", so this was transformed into "indulged in sentimental friendships with young girls" and attributed to her senility (described with a chillingly acid relish and some inaccuracy in the final paragraph of the essay). Cardinal Manning was shown as self-seeking and ambitious; and as his interest in social problems, and zealous work even in extreme old age, would diminish the impact of this limited interpretation, this aspect of his life had to be given a demoniac quality ("A kind of frenzy fell upon him").

The characteristics of the Eminent Victorians were further accentuated by dramatic contrasts with others—the forceful scheming Manning and the amiable pathetic Newman ("The Eagle and the Dove"), the domineering Florence Nightingale ("the terrible commander who had driven Sidney Herbert to his death"), and the eccentric Gordon contrasted with the callous self-seeking Evelyn Baring.

Turning to the individual essays, the two themes of the longest of them, "Cardinal Manning", were the irrelevance and triviality of the Christian religion and the ambition of Manning—the "superstitious egotist." Anglicans and Roman Catholics alike were presented as contemptible. Archdeacon Hare (in fact a man of extensive knowledge and breadth of views) was described as a low Churchman, placated by Manning in a trivial dispute about pews. The Cardinals at Rome had "shrewd eyes and hard faces" and "large and not too clean" ears. Monsignor Talbot was shown as an arch-intriguer with the misfortune of ending his days in an asylum. Strachey made this latter point twice lest it should be overlooked.

Manning himself was depicted throughout as moved solely by ambition, both as a showy and worldly Archdeacon ("cutting brilliant figures on the ice" on the basis of a passing reference in Purcell's biography that he had learned to skate) and in his remarkable career after his conversion to Rome. The episode which it is difficult to interpret in terms of unalloyed ambition is the conversion itself, since Manning then seemed assured of a distinguished career in the Church of England. Strachey—without any insight into the religious conflict—could only fit this into his preconceived pattern by implying that, at his interview with the Pope in 1848, Manning was promised promotion if he went over to Rome.

> "What did Pio Nono say? It is easy to imagine the persuasive innocence of his Italian voice. 'Ah, dear Signor Manning, why don't you come over to us? Do you suppose that we should not look after you?'"

This flight of fancy was supported by an earlier entry: "Precisely what passed on that occasion never transpired". However Purcell's book (which was Strachey's main source) made it clear that Manning went to the Vatican to present a translation of Sir Charles Trevelyan's pamphlet on famine relief; his journal and an account of the intervieu he gave to Purcell touched on various subjects discussed, apart from the remark that Strachey recorded as "all that is known." One critic has declared that Strachey's evidence here was "not merely false but falsified."[5] Holroyd rejoined that Purcell himself made something of a mystery of the interview, but this in itself provides no basis for the imaginary papal promise. There is a certain piquancy about Strachey's comment on Manning: "Whatever else he was, he was not unscrupulous."

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, the contrasting figure in the Manning essay, was made a pathetic character, a permanent victim, credulous and frustrated. On one occasion he visited his old parish of Littlemore, accompanied by Father Ambrose St John, and was moved by the experience of returning to familiar scenes. He was asked to visit a former parishioner and his first reaction was to say "Oh no, no", but he later did so. In Strachey's hands this appeared as the visit of a solitary, anonymous old man who kept repeating this phrase with the tears streaming down his face! By this and other passages, Strachey portrayed Newman as a feeble ambitious man who failed, contrasted with Manning, the ruthless ambitious man who succeeded. Newman was badly treated by the Roman Catholic Church and by Manning himself, but he was a man of strong will, fiery temper, and outspoken views, as well as of great spiritual and intellectual reserves. Augustine Birrell wrote to Strachey: "Anyone less like a dove than J.H.N. it would be hard to picture." Strachey admitted: "I think perhaps my whole treatment of Newman is over-sentimentalised—to make a foil for the other Cardinal"; and he added "I should like to alter it" but, though there were later editions, he did not do so.

ANDANTE IS A CURIOUS SUBTITLE for the second essay, since Strachey saw Florence Nightingale as possessed by a demon. His account of her life and character has been subjected to the most meticulous analysis of any of the Eminent Victorians by Rosalind Vaughan Nash, Miss Nightingale's cousin, who had worked with Sir Edward Cook

[4] See C. R. Sanders, *Lytton Strachey: His Mind and Art* (1957), pp. 202–3, where such criticisms are rather brushed aside.

[5] F. A. Simpson, "Methods of History" in *The Spectator*, 7 June 1944, pp. 7–8.

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on the authorised biography (1914) and had abridged it in 1925. She noted examples of Strachey's distortion or inaccuracy in using facts from Cook's biography—many trifling in themselves, but building up to the picture of an obsessive and unnatural interest in nursing from childhood, a superhuman achievement at Scutari, and an invariably aggressive attitude to others. An episode which in its original form suggested a resolution to tackle a difficult task was retold to make it an attempt to brow-beat a doctor.[6]

In 1859 Florence Nightingale wrote *Notes on Nursing*; it is according to Strachey "that classical compendium of the besetting sins of the sisterhood, drawn up with the detailed acrimony, the vindictive relish, of a Swift." To those who actually read the book, it is an agreeably lively, practical and compassionate volume of advice on home nursing, whose preface ends quietly: "I do not pretend to teach her how, I ask her to teach herself, and for this purpose I venture to give her some hints."

Strachey's full melodrama, however, was reserved for the attempt of Florence Nightingale and Sidney Herbert to reform the War Office in 1861. Sir Edward Cook described it as "one fight more, the best and the last." Strachey, failing to realise that Browning's *Prospice* was not published until 1864, transferred this to Florence Nightingale: " 'One fight more, the best and the last', she said. . . ." In his account, also, he made it as much a fight between Florence Nightingale and Herbert—"the tigress and the stag"—as with official obstruction.

Herbert's health broke down and he was a dying man when he had to give up the efforts for administrative reform, in which he had been constantly opposed by Sir Benjamin Hawes, the Permanent Under-secretary, and to consider resignation. Strachey described his meeting with Florence Nightingale after this:

> " 'Beaten!' she exclaimed. 'Can't you see that you've simply thrown away the game? And with all the winning cards in your hands! And so noble a game! Sidney Herbert beaten! And beaten by Ben Hawes! It is a worse disgrace. . .' her full rage burst out at last '. . . a worse disgrace than the hospitals at Scutari'. "

This dramatic episode was derived from a letter which she wrote to Sir John McNeill: "A Sidney Herbert beaten by a Ben Hawes is a greater humiliation really (as a matter of principle) than the disaster of Scutari." For the interview with Sidney Herbert we have her own account, written to Harriet Martineau in the period of deep distress following Herbert's death, when she would certainly not minimise her own shortcomings:

> "And I, too, was hard upon him. I told him that Cavour's death was a blow to European liberty, but that a greater blow was that Sidney Herbert should be beaten upon his own ground by a bureaucracy. I told him that no man in my day had thrown away so noble a game with all the winning cards in his hands. And his angelic temper with me, at the same time that he felt what I said was true, I shall never forget."

Mrs Vaughan Nash commented of Strachey's treatment of this episode: "The real pain and sadness of this last interview he does not see. It is too quiet for him. Instead we are given his two special creations 'raging' and 'quivering' at each other." Sir Edward Cook's biography, praised by Strachey as "an honourable exception to the current commodity" had already humanised the unreal angel of sentimental legend; Strachey swung the pendulum to the opposite extreme.

His persistent influence was shown in *Florence Nightingale* (1950) by Cecil Woodham-Smith, whose account of the events of 1860–61 again credited Miss Nightingale with anticipating Browning. The account of the "terrible interview" with Herbert in which "she lashed him with her tongue" again used words actually written to Sir James McNeill (though quoted a little more correctly than by Strachey).[7]

DR ARNOLD—*Scherzo* was treated with comparative brevity, and was shown largely in isolation, without a conflict theme. It was more of a caricature than the others, but Holroyd defended it as such; "Lytton needed to invent or suppress no major facts in order to produce the preposterous impression he wanted", but it is an extreme example of selectivity. The element of personal malice may be due in part to Strachey's own school experiences, and partly to the contemptuous hostility he and his friends felt towards Mrs Humphry Ward, Arnold's grand-daughter.

Perhaps too much attention has been given to the somewhat ludicrous matter of Arnold's short legs, which were introduced as part of "the index of his inward character." Sir Edward Marsh claimed that Strachey had admitted to him that he invented this, though other sources suggest that he believed that he had read it somewhere. More serious is the lack of balance in the account of Arnold's character. Strachey found his moral earnestness completely unacceptable, and tellingly illustrated its intellectual limitations. He also made the valid point that Arnold was not as

[6] Sir Edward Cook, *The Life of Florence Nightingale* (2 vols., 1914); abridged and revised by Rosalind Nash (1925). Rosalind Nash "Florence Nightingale according to Mr Strachey" in *Nineteenth Century* (1929), pp. 258–265.

[7] Cecil Woodham-Smith, *Florence Nightingale 1820–1910* (1950), pp. 353, 367–8.

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revolutionary an educational theorist as had been claimed for him at times; but he was blind to the strength of Arnold's personality and the influence he exerted through it. His hopes for Christian reunion were certainly in advance of much of the thinking of his age; he had intellectual curiosity; and he felt an inner tension between the claims of Christian goodness and theological dogma which, if he did not always follow it to its logical limits, stimulated a questing spirit in some of his pupils (which has been traced, in the cases of Dean Stanley, J. P. Gell, A. H. Clough, and William Arnold, by Frances Woodward.[8]). Strachey minimised the gentler aspects of Arnold's character. To read in his letters of his love of the Lakes, of a walk in the rain and a swim on the way home, and of his family happiness, is to realise how much has been left out.[9] Mrs Ward's comment was, "The coarse caricature of my grandfather, Arnold of Rugby, which the book contains, does not trouble me much. He will, I think, survive it."

IN EACH OF THE FIRST THREE "movements" of Strachey's work one theme recurs—the character of Arthur Hugh Clough, the permanent victim of the dominating personalities described. As a pupil of Arnold's he was described as having weak ankles and this was repeated five lines later. It is perhaps late in the day to note that Clough's disability was temporary and that he was a noted runner, swimmer, and goalkeeper. In a few contemptuous sentences his career was summed up:

> "it was not surprising . . . that he should have lost his faith; that he should have spent the rest of his existence lamenting that loss, both in prose and verse; and that he should have eventually succumbed, conscientiously doing up brown paper parcels for Florence Nightingale."

There is a brief and somewhat pathetic account of him in "Cardinal Manning." In "Florence Nightingale" he was described as buying her railway tickets, correcting proofs, and doing up parcels. A few pages later, he "died too: never more would he tie up her parcels." In his thousand-page biography of Florence Nightingale, Sir Edward Cook has one passing mention of a parcel, in a letter from Clough. For Strachey to introduce three references into his 310 pages is a curious illustration of his policy of excluding "everything that is redundant and nothing that is significant."

Clough was far from being the pathetic dupe of this version. He was a man greatly loved by his many friends, a genuine if minor poet whose work has at times a considerable edge to it—indeed, Strachey might have found material in "The Shadow" for his attacks on the Roman Catholic Church. Clough suffered both spiritually and materially from his quest for truth—an inheritance from Arnold's stimulation of his intellectual curiosity and honesty—and was puzzled as to the right task he should fulfil in life. He welcomed the chance to be secretary to Florence Nightingale in her reforming work and committees. It seemed to her at times that there was too much drudgery involved—"a racehorse harnessed to a coal truck", but though she was exacting, she was generous, and Clough's response showed that in these tasks he felt he had found a satisfying purpose.

Lady Ritchie protested to Strachey about his presentation of Clough but he defended it:

> "I did not, of course, attempt to tell the *whole* truth about him . . . he seems to me to embody a whole set of weaknesses which have been hitherto either ignored or treated as virtues, and against which it was one of the main purposes of my book to make a protest."

THE FINAL PORTION of *Eminent Victorians*, "The End of General Gordon", provoked two extreme reactions. To some, the unheroic portrayal of a military leader matched a mood of growing disillusion with a war nearing the end of its fourth year. To others, the denigration by a conscientious objector of a soldier who died at his post seemed particularly offensive. It was based on varied sources, some of them dubious—as he admitted (as something of an afterthought); the authenticity of the *Memoirs* of Li Hung Chang had been disputed, and Colonel Chaillé-Long's writings require discrimination in their use.

Chaillé-Long was the main source of the most controversial point of Strachey's essay—Gordon's drinking. The American critic Leonard Bacon has written: "I personally doubt that the brandy he consumed in a lifetime was equal in quantity to the ink expended in proving that he was or was not a drunkard",[10] and the subject has indeed been well explored. Its treatment in *Eminent Victorians* does however illustrate Strachey's use of sources. On page 234 he wrote of Gordon in the Sudan shutting himself up in his tent in "fits of melancholy", with orders that he was not to be disturbed. He described an episode when the camp was attacked. Colonel Chaillé-Long, one of Gordon's staff, entered the tent, found him with "an open Bible and an open bottle of brandy" and was told by him

[8] Frances J. Woodward, *The Doctor's Disciples*, 1954.

[9] A. P. Stanley, *Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold* (2 vols., 1845), vol. I, pp. 236, 240, 322–24, 402.

[10] Leonard Bacon, "An Eminent Post-Victorian" in *Yale Review* (1941), p. 318.

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"You are the commander of the camp." He had to make the best of the situation. Next day Gordon, restored to good spirits, invited Chaillé-Long to "a good breakfast—a little b. and s."

Apart from a passing reference to Gordon drinking whisky in Sir Richard Burton's writings, this passage is a conflation from Chaillé-Long's books. He was an American, who may well have borne a grudge against Gordon following the publication of Gordon's letters, in which some references to his inadequacies were made. The date of the alleged attack on the camp was January 1875. In his book *Central Africa*, published the following year, Chaillé-Long described this period without any reference to an attack at all; nor does the diary of Ernst Marno, who was also in the camp, mention it. All the indications, too, are that this was a very busy time for Gordon who could hardly have fitted in periods of retirement. In 1884 Chaillé-Long published *The Three Prophets*, a curious study of Arabi, the Mahdi, and Gordon, in which he described the last retiring to his tent "for the perusal and meditation of his ever-present Bible and prayer book."[11]

DURING THE 1890s, Chaille-Long produced increasingly fantastic versions of events in Africa, and as an old man, in 1912, he wrote *My Life in Four Continents*, in which Gordon was accused of kicking his servant (duly repeated by Strachey), advocating swindling the Khedive, and finally being in his tent during the night attack. On this occasion the story was that he had not only a Bible but "a bottle of cognac and sherry"—Strachey added the adjective "open" to the bottle.[12] Thus, on this very dubious testimony, he not merely alleged that Gordon was a heavy drinker but that he was guilty of dereliction of duty under its influence.

Strachey gave this essay the title *Rondo*—which is defined as a "piece of music with leading theme to which return is made." This is no bad description of the drink theme, for apart from the elaboration of the camp episode there are two further references. One was when W. T. Stead visited him at Southampton—"when he was in the mood—after a little b. and s., especially. . . ." At Khartoum—"Rum? Brandy? Oh, he knew all about them; they were nothing. He tossed off a glass. They were nothing at all."

Miss Stead has stated that no refreshments were served at this meeting and that her father never touched stimulants. Michael Holroyd—on the whole, scrupulously fair in his account of *Eminent Victorians*—was somewhat disingenuous in his treatment of this point—if Gordon was a secret drinker, he would have had his tot before Stead arrived. "Of course there is no documentary material to support this supposition. Lytton did not proclaim it as an absolute authenticated fact, but knowing Gordon's habits. . . ." Comment is superfluous. Dr Bernard Allen, Lord Elton and others who have defended General Gordon have never asserted that he was a total abstainer but have argued on the evidence of those who knew him, and the unquestionable facts of his physical fitness under trying climatic conditions, that Strachey's version is untenable. Further evidence comes from letters collected by the late Sir Hesketh Bell, chiefly from those who knew Gordon in Mauritius, where the smallness of the British community would have made any heavy drinking common knowledge. Holroyd assembled a few quotations to support Strachey, but they are very thin evidence indeed to justify his use of the word "dipsomaniac".[13]

In contrast to the erratic, impulsive visionary Gordon, Strachey described the cool, reserved, ambitious Evelyn Baring, later Lord Cromer. There was a personal element in the hostility of this portrait. Lytton's cousin, St Loe Strachey, was a friend and admirer of Cromer and shared his imperialistic views. Lytton had grown increasingly hostile to the political outlook of *The Spectator*, to which Cromer was a contributor, especially during the war.

His portrayal of Cromer aroused more immediate protests than any other in *Eminent Victorians*, notably from Edmund Gosse and Lord Sanderson in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and from Maurice Baring and St Loe Strachey in *The Spectator*. This was partly due to the fact that Cromer had died little more than a year previously, working even in his last illness on the report of the Dardanelles Commission. This, to his friends, gave a singular offensiveness to "He looked forward to a pleasant retirement—a country place—some literary recreations."

Strachey wrote of Cromer's career: "It was passed entirely in the East; and the East meant very little to him; he took no interest in it." This assertion was hotly contradicted by several correspondents but Strachey held to his point—"Eastern administrative questions are not the

[11] C. Chaillé-Long, *Central Africa* (1876), pp. 236–44; E. Marno, *Reise in der Egyptischen Aequatorial-Provinz* (1878), pp. 60–71; C. Chaillé-Long, *The Three Prophets* (1884), pp. 50–51.

[12] C. Chaillé-Long, *My Life in Four Continents* (2 vols., 1912), vol. I, pp. 122–23, 214, 218–9; B. M. Allen, *Gordon in the Sudan* (1931), pp. 90–91.

[13] Allen, pp. 82–96. Lord Elton, *General Gordon* (1954), pp. 196–212. Unpublished letters, collected by Sir Hesketh Bell, now in the Royal Commonwealth Society Library. Holroyd, II, p. 314.

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East." In this connection it may be noted that Cromer was the leading advocate of the establishment of a School of Oriental Studies in London and first Chairman of the committee to plan it.

His departure from Egypt to London in 1884, when affairs in the Sudan were growing desperate, was summed up: "during the most momentous period of the whole crisis—he was engaged in London upon a financial conference. . . . With a characteristically convenient unobtrusiveness, Sir Evelyn Baring had vanished from the scene." Sources actually cited in Strachey's bibliography make it clear that during this period he was personally pressing the Government to send a relief expedition, not (as the passage suggests) evading responsibility.[14]

THE FINAL SENTENCE of *Eminent Victorians* is typical in many ways of the whole volume. After describing the battle of Omdurman, Strachey wrote: "At any rate, it had all ended very happily—in a glorious slaughter of twenty thousand Arabs, a vast addition to the British Empire, and a step in the Peerage for Sir Evelyn Baring." Baring actually received the news of Omdurman at the bedside of his dying wife.[15]

WHATEVER THE LATER CRITICISMS of individual aspects, *Eminent Victorians* attracted widespread attention on its publication. *The Times* called it "a brilliant and extraordinarily witty book", J. C. Squire acclaimed "a masterpiece of its kind", and a leading article in *The Daily Telegraph* commented that it had "attained a celebrity quite remarkable for literary work produced in times of war." Despite some dissenting voices, which rather pleased Strachey, the general approval raised the question of a successor.

He had been reading Queen Victoria's diary in December 1917, but the impetus to write the Queen's life came in a letter from Professor Walter Raleigh on 13 May 1918: "We want your method for some stately Victorians who have waited long for it. First the great Panjandrum—Victoria herself." Strachey began research early in 1919 and two years later he completed the book with the famous retrospective final paragraph, which he had actually written first. It was published in April 1921.

The book has a much greater precision in citing sources, and even notes when there is no authentic origin for an anecdote which has an air of credibility. Strachey did however tend to assert deductions as facts, *e.g.* a paragraph on Prince Albert's relations with the Queen began categorically: "He was not in love with her", whereas the sources noted do not necessarily bear that interpretation. In recent years, researchers in the Royal Archives and elsewhere have corrected some of his errors in this respect.[16] It is however noteworthy that, writing a bare twenty years after the Queen's death, when only her early letters had been published, and having to rely largely on memoirists such as Creevey and Greville, he produced so life-like and rounded a portrait. Elizabeth Longford, in her own recent biography of the Queen commented: "Lytton Strachey, despite the limited sources at his disposal, has left a portrait which in its own way is inimitable."

There was considerable surprise at the sympathy shown by Strachey for the Queen herself. Though he depicted her with many human failings, and included some extracts from her letters and journals which seem particularly commonplace out of context, the over-all picture is surprisingly genial. As Max Beerbohm put it, "Essentially, the simple Sir Theodore [Martin] and the serpentine Lytton S. are at one about her."

Criticisms of the book have been concerned more with matters of interpretation than with misuse of known facts. Roger Fulford, for example, in *The Prince Consort*, contested Strachey's picture of him as ponderous and dull—"it is important not to argue as Lytton Strachey does, that because he lacked a certain lightness of touch he was 'miserable' and because he was solemn he was 'sick at heart'." He also disputed Strachey's comments on the Prince's artistic taste. Nevertheless, his book included the tribute: "though here and there I may differ from him, I venture . . . to acclaim it as still the greatest contribution by one man to a true understanding of a glorious epoch in English history." He also made several specific references to Strachey's insight.

Queen Victoria portrayed the Queen from a limited viewpoint in a series of essays, primarily showing her relations with her family and her ministers. The politicians depicted—Melbourne, Peel, Palmerston, Gladstone and Disraeli—were shown from a restricted aspect—their policies and principles emerge only in the context of their relation to the Queen—but with considerable skill. The tendentiousness of *Eminent Victorians*

[14] B. Holland, *Life of the Duke of Devonshire* (2 vols., 1911), Vol. I, pp. 463, 466. Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt* (1911), Chapter XXVII. Lord Sanderson reiterated this from personal knowledge as Lord Granville's Secretary. *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 July 1918, p. 337.

[15] Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, p. 540.

[16] See Elizabeth Longford, *Victoria R.I.* (1964), p. 87; Roger Fulford, *The Prince Consort* (1949), pp. 167, 169, 272.

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did not vanish but was somewhat modified, and Max Beerbohm has pointed out the skill with which Strachey adapted his prose style to the varied characters of these men. Perhaps Melbourne and Palmerston were the most satisfying portraits, and this is significant, for they were essentially Regency survivals, from a period linked in many ways with Strachey's favourite 18th century. Peel was a less rounded figure. Gladstone, who also played a major part in "The End of General Gordon", was totally uncongenial to Strachey. He was also puzzled by Disraeli, but his description of him as "the strange old comedian" flattering the Queen—"In those expert hands the trowel seemed to assume the qualities of some lofty masonic symbol"—is a masterly one.

Strachey's human portrayal of the Queen was reflected in Laurence Housman's *Palace Plays* and their successors, and, following the granting in 1936 of permission to impersonate the Queen, in the stage and film productions which stemmed from them. In spite of the welcome extended to *Queen Victoria*, Strachey's own subsequent writings on the Victorian era were limited to short essays later included in his *Portraits in Miniature*, and for his other substantial biography he turned to a very different subject and style—*Elizabeth and Essex*, published in 1928, four years before his death. Here he had a different type of evidence to handle, and his interpretation and conclusions were influenced by Freudian theories, while his style had dramatic overtones and his imagination came into full play. Though the book received favourable comments from some historians, including G. M. Trevelyan and A. L. Rowse, it has probably been far less influential than *Eminent Victorians* and *Queen Victoria*, on which his reputation as a biographer has been based.

SINCE THEIR FIRST warm reception, they have been assessed and reassessed many times and in contrasting ways. "Strachey's work sounds like the flop of a large man who has tried to dive and failed", wrote C. S. Lewis. Edmund Wilson noted "his curious catty malice", but Edwin Muir declared "Every stroke of irony in his books is weighed not for its effectiveness but for its justice", and G. M. Trevelyan wrote "you have not only historical sense . . . but *judgement*."

On the whole, *Queen Victoria* was more widely applauded than *Eminent Victorians*, though Strachey himself preferred the latter.

It became clear, too, to both hostile and friendly critics, that these books were to have a considerable influence on biographical method and style. "Man is led by man, and we have been led by Mr Strachey", wrote Lord David Cecil, who considered *Queen Victoria* "a model biography." Some who welcomed Strachey's own work were concerned at the imitations of his lesser qualities. Harold Nicolson regretted that this aspect "deteriorated so rapidly that it became an irritating trick of superciliousness." James Truslow Adams wrote: "There is, however, only one Strachey, and his influence has been little short of disastrous", and to Douglas Southall Freeman he was "one of the most pernicious influences in modern biography."[17]

Strachey himself, however, would never have been a significant influence if his own work had not had positive qualities to which his weaker imitators could not aspire. In his view, biography demanded construction, balance, and literary skill. He saw his subjects as human beings, to be made alive by the use of their own words, and if in place of the stained-glass window portraits of "official biography" he substituted images of the Max Beerbohm school, it gave a challenge to others to produce life-like portraits. With all its exaggerations, his evocation of Gordon, for example, does convey something of the eccentric vitality of a remarkable man. Subordinate characters were vividly presented and never seen as static. His style was eminently readable and flexible. If his case was overstated, and many of his distortions too readily accepted, the date of publication of his work is significant. Though it was not the first reaction against the Victorian age, Cyril Connolly wrote that "It might be described as the first book of the 'twenties. He struck the note of ridicule which the whole war-weary generation wanted to hear. . . ."

The Victorian age is no longer a subject for obvious mockery; and many of its great figures have been reappraised in recent biographies, drawing on new sources and presenting characters—the Queen herself, Gladstone, Disraeli, Palmerston, Peel, and others—with a comprehensiveness and honesty which Strachey himself would have welcomed.[18]

[17] Lord David Cecil, Introduction to *An Anthology of Modern Biography* (1936). James Truslow Adams, "New Modes in Biography" in *Current History* (1929), p. 259. Sanders, p. 205.

[18] Philip Magnus, *Gladstone* (1954). Norman Gash, *Mr Secretary Peel* (1961). E. Longford, *Victoria R.I.* (1964). Robert Blake, *Disraeli* (1966). Jasper N. Ridley, *Lord Palmerston* (1970).

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LETTERS

The "New York School of Sociology"

MY NOTE "Ideology and No End" (ENCOUNTER, April 1973) described what I called the "New York School of Sociology." It included in my view "such students as Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, Philip Selznick, and, to a lesser extent, Alvin Gouldner", and of course the quintessential figure, Seymour Martin Lipset. I remarked: "Though their political affiliations varied and fluctuated through a variety of sects and parties, they were all deeply concerned by what we might call 'the Trotsky problem'," that is, why did the working class in the thirties fail in its "historic mission . . . ."

Now Professor Lipset in his letter ("Ideology and No End", ENCOUNTER, September) abundantly confirms what I wrote. He states: "These five individuals did all have radical backgrounds. But they ranged widely from Bell's 'Menshevism', Glazer's 'Luxemburgianism', Selznick's and my adherences to diverse forms of Trotskyism, to Gouldner's quite different youthful commitments." This, of course, is precisely what I had said about the affiliations of the "New York School" with a variety of political sects. Somehow Professor Lipset thinks he has contradicted me, but I fear he may have read carelessly.

All of these sects, including the most bizarre, were concerned with the "Trotsky problem." The Luxemburgists sought to re-animate the creative spontaneity of the masses against the dead hand of bureaucracies. To be sure, their principal activity seems to have been to meet under the cover of passwords in the chambers of the New York Public Library. Their principal nucleus, through curious circumstances, was for a while in the Linguistics Section of the University of Pennsylvania. Thus it happened that Nathan Glazer received a fellowship to study the Swahili language, for which work he received his M.A. degree. The "Trotsky problem" was clearly in Daniel Bell's mind when he wrote his first essays for *The New Leader* on the future of society almost in a Burnhamite gloom.

Robert K. Merton's influence was strong whether the particular "New Yorkers" enrolled in his courses formally or not. At a social gathering after the War where I first noted this trend, I recall that Bell and Glazer were much taken with the Mertonian terminology and its claim for functionalism as the scientific basis for sociology.

The statement that Seymour Lipset was "the one majority-Trotskyist at City College" was not based on either mythology or memory. It is enshrined in my record book of 1940–42, and was a transcript of what he and his friends told me. Of course, sectarian commitments fluctuated rapidly; and it may be that Lipset, at earlier or later intervals, had, at that stage, ideological comrades. Regrettably, though he says "there were others", no other name seems spontaneously to have come to his memory.

As the formulation of an "ideal type" in the history of sociological schools, the notion of a "New York School of Sociology" will, I think, prove to be a fruitful one.

LEWIS S. FEUER

University of Toronto

Discussion Piece

YOU ASK FOR a comment on the note "Pugwash and After" in your August issue, and say you hope you haven't been "unfair" (your quotation marks). If by "unfair" you mean sneering, then our answer is "yes", if you mean inaccurate and ill-informed, our answer is "yes" to that too.

This could have been avoided by reading what we write and enquiring what we do.

WAYLAND YOUNG (KENNET),
ELIZABETH YOUNG

London

University Crisis

I FEEL certain that your readers will be interested in the following resolution which was adopted by the "Crisis of the University" conference held in Venice, October 14–17.

"The present crisis in the universities of the advanced democracies consists in large part in the illusion that the crisis has abated. It is true that violence and intimidation have diminished in many of our institutions. Unhappily, they remain serious in some countries. And underneath the surface calm, concessions to expediency are being made every day which, in a large number of our universities, have led to the recruitment of teachers on political grounds and to methods for selecting and teaching students extraneous to the primary business of transmitting intellectual disciplines and seeking the truth. Every nation in which that is happening is being morally and spiritually impoverished.

"We note with special anguish and shock the state of affairs in Germany and Denmark, where legislatures have imposed or endorsed rules for the governance of universities which, if they long remain in effect, condemn these countries, in our opinion, to intellectual debasement.

"This crisis of the university is due above all to the making of short-sighted decisions in moments of confrontation and tension, rather than developing principled policies capable of guiding universities to the new structures they need while many remain faithful to the abiding values they serve.

"We would be unfaithful to those values were we to fail to express at the same time grave concern for the fate of scholars and universities in countries elsewhere, where academic freedom has been extinguished and scholars and students still are subject to intimidation, imprisonment and brutality. Our own freedoms are related to their fate, as theirs are to ours.

"The Council has therefore decided to continue its work on a broader and more permanent basis as an

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'International Council on the Future of the University.' It will endeavour to organise a regular exchange of information on the problems of the universities in the free countries and to publish the results, in order to draw attention both to promising innovations and to serious dangers wherever they may arise. More detailed plans will presently be issued."

CHARLES FRANKEL
Chairman

Department of Philosophy,
Columbia University

The Big U.S. Foundations

A Reply to Letwin—By WALDEMAR NIELSEN

DESPITE THE WILD UPPERCUT he threw at one of my major recommendations ("disastrously dangerous" he calls it) Professor William Letwin's review of my foundation study (ENCOUNTER, December) delights me. Rarely have I been painted in more heroic posture—holding aloft the banner of activism and fearlessly exorting the foundations to charge in tight formation into the valley of politics, there to be annihilated by shot and shell from both Left and Right.

But I gather that he and I share a belief in the importance of the survival of foundations. We seem to have considerable differences about what can reasonably be expected of them, how effective they currently are, and what areas of activity in the United States currently offer them their greatest opportunity for service.

He evidently is so overwhelmed with admiration by the thought that a donor would leave any of his fortune to establish a foundation that he is prepared to consider the performance adequate if the resulting institution does a *little* good, no *undue* harm, and provides people with "small yet welcome conveniences." My own view is less indulgent. In transactional terms, such return is an inadequate social *quid pro quo* for the enormous tax advantages offered to donors and the regulatory nuisance foundations present. Still more important, it is much too little in view of the great creative potentialities the foundation device contains.

Professor Letwin's indifference to the need for higher norms for foundations must derive from an erroneous understanding about the actual effectiveness of most of the large American foundations at the present time. He seems to assume that the best known of them—Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie, splendid institutions all—are typical of the rest. Regrettably, they are not. Moody, Richardson, Nemours, Irvine and Ahmanson are among the less known but very large foundations whose performance ranges from the deplorable to the ludicrous. There are many others that are at best passive, at worst inert. In asserting, therefore, that the purposes and performance of foundations are on the whole commendable, he is swimming out well beyond the depth of his evidence.

It was my recommendation that the big foundations begin to give more attention to the great and urgent issues of American society—and this outrages and frightens him. He believes that if they go into such matters, they will not survive the public controversy which will follow. My view is that they will probably not survive if they don't, and in any event if they remain irrelevant to such issues it becomes less than crucial whether or not they survive.

But in making such a statement I fear I am slipping into the rhetorical extravagance of Professor Letwin. Actually, what I have proposed when seen in context is quite mild and modest. I do not urge, and I surely do not anticipate, any headlong plunge by all foundations into social activism, abandoning their established work in medicine, higher education, and other fields. Moreover, as a firm believer that the essential importance of philanthropy is its contribution to pluralism, I feel there is neither desirability nor possibility that foundation programmes should be uniform in their objectives and priorities. What I am urging is an incremental change in emphasis in the direction of contemporary social and economic issues on the part of whatever few foundations may find my arguments persuasive.

ONE MUST KEEP IN MIND the extraordinary distaste of American foundations for such potentially controversial issues. According to the findings of a conservative private commission in 1969 headed by Mr Peter Peterson, one of our leading businessmen and recently President Nixon's Secretary of Commerce, *only one per cent* of all American foundations viewed *any* of their grants as controversial in the prior two-year period and such grants amounted to only 0·1% of their total outlays. Apart from controversiality, only 3% of the grants of American foundations between 1966–1968—according to their own evaluation—could be considered "innovative, experimental, or out-of-the-ordinary."

It would be a dramatic surge in the direction of activism therefore—and of great gratification to me—if these foundations were to triple their outlays for projects relevant to some of our acute social issues—to raise, them, that is, even to 0·3% of their total grants.

Such an increase would apparently be regarded by Professor Letwin as suicidal. In my view it would be simply sensible—and given the needs, highly desirable. Granted that some foundations (particularly Ford) have got themselves and other foundations as well into difficulty by adventures into social activism. But many observers here, including the heads of a number of foundations, feel that the uproar provoked by Ford in recent years by such grants was more a demonstration of the ineptness and insensitivity of

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the foundation's top management, combined with an exquisitely bad sense of timing, than of public antagonism towards foundation activity in areas of major national concern. Even Ford's *gaffes* would probably have passed with little commotion had it not been for the grossly disproportionate size of Ford, plus the fact that its president, Mr McGeorge Bundy, remains an inflammatory political figure because of his role in the early 1960s as an architect of U.S. foreign policy (Viet Nam, etc.).

If American philanthropy is in political jeopardy at the present time—as I believe it is—it is due much more to its élitism and irrelevance than to any penchant for political involvement. Trade unionists, Blacks, and young people increasingly view foundations with sentiments ranging from scepticism to outright hostility. Many see them as little more than artifacts of the tax loophole, instruments conceived and manipulated for the benefit of the already excessively privileged. These attitudes may, or may not, be fair and well founded—but they do raise the question whether the survival of foundations is likely to be assured by ignoring or by responding in some degree to the changing perceptions and priorities of broad sectors of the American populace.

I HAVE TRIED TO TAKE such comfort as I can from Professor Letwin's reassurance that our so-called "pressing social problems" aren't nearly as pressing as many Americans seem to think. However, sitting here in New York in an atmosphere noticeably distressed by a South-east Asian war that won't stop, rampant inflation, neglected urban, racial and other problems—and, of course, Watergate—I am not quite persuaded that they are mere figments of our well-known over-excitability. It may indeed be our different assessment of the urgency of these matters that is the crux and basis of the differences between my critic and myself.

Letwin's Reply

IN ORDER THAT the real point of our disagreement may stand out as clearly as possible, I would like to refute three allegations that Mr Nielsen makes about my state of mind.

He says first that I am "evidently . . . overwhelmed with admiration" for the generosity of those who established foundations. Although I suppose that generosity occasionally enters their deliberations, and although I would not hesitate to applaud it when present, I explained in the first section of the review why many donors have no choice but to give away their money somehow. If the laws encourage them to leave money to philanthropic foundations, so much the better, provided the foundations disburse it in an acceptable (even though not ideal) manner. I judge the Big Foundations' performance to have been acceptable in that they do "little good and less harm" (as I put it in the review) though I would be less certain if I believed, as he makes me out to have said, that they do "a little good [and] no *undue* harm." A preponderance of benefit over harm ought to be welcomed, even when slight; and an effort to improve the balance ought to be opposed if it seems not only risky but misdirected.

He says further that my "indifference to the need for higher norms . . . must derive from an erroneous understanding" of how foundations act now. It is not indifference which makes me disagree with him but rather a warm conviction that what he calls "higher norms" are really "ill-conceived ends." As to "erroneous understanding", my judgment that the work of the Big Foundations has been tolerable "on the whole" is based on evidence Nielsen presents that they spend most of their income on mildly commendable purposes.

He implies, finally, that I am excessively calm about the "pressing social problems" of the United States. Certainly I reject the view, which he shares with many others, that the United States is in the midst of a great political crisis. I understand "crisis" to be that state of things which comes just before collapse and disaster (such as death or paralysis, revolution or conquest)—a state of things which alone justifies urgent and extreme measures. I do not believe that a crisis in this precise sense exists in America—not even in connection with Watergate, since I feel confident that the Constitution and State will easily survive the demission or dismissal of Mr Nixon, or his continuance in office. I believe, moreover, that disasters are needlessly produced by people who take extreme actions to deal with a crisis that never existed except in their own imaginations.

Still, leaving aside the question of crisis, I agree that there are political issues about which (as I emphasised) "Americans disagree vehemently." Were the foundations to accept Nielsen's advice, they would take sides on such issues; and I believe that their political opponents would retaliate by putting foundations under detailed control of government, as they have already started to do. If, on the contrary, the foundations reject Nielsen's advice, they may survive and might be persuaded to do more by way of sponsoring long-term, non-practical research and scholarship of sorts which are not popular enough to gain support in other quarters. Like Nielsen, I believe that the performance of foundations could be improved. I, too, would urge them to change, but in just the opposite direction.

WILLIAM LETWIN

London School of Economics

Eysenck & the "New Zealots"

WHILE READING H. J. EYSENCK's "The Dangers of The New Zealots" [ENCOUNTER, December] I found myself wondering whether a professor of psychology might not have foreseen most, if not all, of the irrational reactions he describes, and used a few "ploys" of his own in the service of reason. As it is, IQ testers would appear to score rather poorly on PR tests!

CHARLES BYASS

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